

PROPERTY OF
THE CHURCH ON THE WAY

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Living papers concerning Christian
evidences, doctrine and morals.

PROPERTY OF
THE CHURCH ON THE WAY

LIVING PAPERS

CONCERNING

CHRISTIAN EVIDENCES, DOCTRINE, AND MORALS.

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PREFACE.

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IT is believed that the ELEVENTH VOLUME of LIVING PAPERS will yield to few of its predecessors in variety and interest. Two of the Papers in the Volume have a bearing on questions of Science which are much thought of at the present time. In *The Two Geologies*, Mr. Lewis traces, in an interesting and suggestive manner, the numerous correspondences between the geology of the Bible and the geology of Science; while in *The Origin of Life and Consciousness*, Dr. Chapman goes a step further back, and argues that believers in the evolutionary theories of the day are quite unable to give any satisfactory account of the process by which life and consciousness originated. The theories of the mechanical school, such as Darwin and Haeckel, and of the non-mechanical school, such as Lotze, Stewart, and Tait, are shown to be equally unsatisfactory; and therefore, the account of the origin of life and consciousness which God's Word reveals, is held to be the only one which occupies the field.

An attack has been made on Christianity in these days on the ground of the supposed selfishness of the idea of the salvation of the soul from the punishment of sin. This is met by Mr. Kaufmann, in the Paper on *Egoism, Altruism, and Christian Eudaimonism*. He points out that distinction must be made between legitimate and illegitimate forms of Egoism;

and contrasts Christian Altruism with modern substitutes. The author proceeds to examine the character and teaching of Christ, and to show that the religion of Christ can alone solve the problem of life.

Two of the Papers take up the argument for Christianity from the historical point of view. In the *Argument for Christianity from the Experience of Christians*, the late Principal Cairns argues from the consciousness of the natural antagonism that there is to Christianity, which is succeeded by a consciousness of harmony with it, that the change experienced by all true Christians is due to supernatural power. It is argued further that the change involved in Christian experience authenticates Christianity as a revelation from God, since it is the fulfilment of prophecy, and confirms the argument for Christianity derived from the supernatural character of the life and work of Christ.

In the other Paper Mr. T. E. Slater surveys *The Influence of the Christian Religion in History*. In broad outline he sketches the preserving and progressive power of Christianity, and also its social and reforming power, and points out how the results of its working in the world put it on a platform entirely different from that occupied by any other religion. As a missionary of many years' standing in India, Mr. Slater is well fitted to judge of the effects of such other religions as are to be met with in that country.

An interesting and useful addition to the series is the Paper on *The Psalms compared with the Hymns of different Religions*

an Evidence of Inspiration. Dr. Blaikie here shows from the remarkable structure and spirit of the Psalms that they must be viewed as the fruits of supernatural Divine inspiration. To prove this, an exposition is given of their more sterling properties, and a comparison is instituted between the Psalms and the so-called sacred songs of Brahminical, the Persian or Zoroastrian, and the Assyrian and other religions, by which the predominant excellence of the Psalms is exhibited.

Two of the authors, Rev. C. Chapman and Mr. T. E. Slater, appear as writers to this Series for the first time.

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ARGUMENT FOR CHRISTIANITY

FROM

THE EXPERIENCE OF CHRISTIANS

BY THE

REV. PRINCIPAL CAIRNS, D.D., LL.D.

Argument of the Tract.

THE place and nature of the argument are indicated. Objections to it are met and answered. It is shown that Christians are conscious of what is not less than a miracle in passing through the great change. The antagonism which they once felt to Christianity, whether they have come out of Judaism or heathenism, or were nominal Christians, is acknowledged. This antagonism is not disproved by the case of those who cannot remember the date when their Christian life seemed to begin. In their case it only began at a period antecedent to the working of memory. Their sense of reaction and struggle proves to them that there was an original antagonism which seeks to regain the mastery.

The Christian's consciousness of antagonism to Christianity is succeeded by a consciousness of harmony with it, and responds to the statements of Scripture describing it as a new creation. It is shown that according to the testimony of men of all schools, Churches exist only to originate and develop this harmony with the will of Christ. The writings of the first Christians are appealed to as proof that they regarded the change through which they had passed as having the nature of an inward miracle, and the agreement with their view by later partakers of their faith is referred to. It is further shown that the change involved in Christian experience authenticates Christianity as a revelation, since it is the fulfilment of prophecy, and confirms the argument for Christianity derived from the supernatural character of the life and work of Christ. Finally, the uses of the argument from Christian experience are set forth.

ARGUMENT FOR CHRISTIANITY

FROM THE EXPERIENCE OF CHRISTIANS.



LARGE place has always been given in the defence of Christianity as a divine revelation to the so-called experience of Christians, but perhaps it has not been so fully discussed, especially in recent times, as some other branches of the Christian argument. This, I think, is much to be regretted, as it has a use of its own for which nothing can compensate. In this Tract I shall endeavour, as briefly as possible, to state this argument, and then I shall touch on some of the special purposes which it is fitted to serve.

Christian
experience
as an
argument
for Chris-
tianity.

What this
Tract
endeavours
to do.

Generally, then, it may be said, that this can only be a separate argument for Christianity by presenting some special fact or facts connected with it, and which prove it to be divine. These facts are roughly described as "Christian experience?" But what, in this connexion, is "Christian

What
Christian
experience
is.

experience?" It is the inward change, which every Christian has gone through, as he himself knows it, and which, thus knowing it, he traces up to God. If there were no such change, this argument would not exist; or if it were so obscure that it could not be read, the argument would be comparatively feeble. But to all who hold that Christianity makes a mighty change, and that it is legible to the inward eye, the materials of this argument exist.

Difference
between the
argument
from
experience
and the
argument
from the
success of
Christianity.

But it is, perhaps, at once objected, Has not this argument been already discussed, under the name of the success or propagation of Christianity? And is it not a kind of juggle to bring it in again under the name of Christian experience? This, however, is not so. The argument from success or propagation is founded upon open historical facts, patent to all the world, and in the main upon facts that establish a predominance of Christianity in public struggles, and wide-spread movements reaching through centuries. The argument from experience is founded upon inward phenomena known to the consciousness of the individual. He may live in a cloudy and dark day, but in his own soul a light has risen that transcends every other. He may have belonged to a country in which the gospel has been drowned in blood; but his last experience of it is that of perfect satisfaction and immortal hope, so that the cause, which seems

lost, to him is gained. It is this interior view, which is independent of numbers, or historical progress, or earth-shaking victories, that is relied upon; and the Christian who would believe, that though he were the only surviving convert, he would be a monument of the mighty power of God, is the kind of example that we require.

It may be objected farther that this argument is private and mystical, that it brings in considerations which are not matters of universal consciousness, and which are not debateable upon the common footing of human intelligence. It remains to be seen, after the statement of the argument, whether this really be so, or how far there is a side of this question which is truly world-wide and open to men of every age and nationality; and it remains to be further seen whether the word "mystical" as applied to Christian experience, may still be protected by the analogies of intuitive knowledge, which, though resting on inward experience, is still raised above delusion and error, or even of special endowments, like those of musical or literary sensibility, which are valid to those who possess them, though to large masses of the uninitiated non-existent, or, in their own case, so dim as to count for nothing.

How the objection to the argument as private and mystical is to be met.

Analogies of intuitive knowledge and special endowments.

Only one other bar to this argument may exist in the minds of some reasoners, in consequence

The
resulting
phenome-
non, not the
originating
cause of
Christian
experience,
relied on
in this
argument.

The
elements
of the
argument
derived from
Christian
experience.

of a misunderstanding. They may suppose that it is an attempt to make Christian experience an argument for itself, which would be an illogical and incoherent procedure. It is freely granted that this is inadmissible, and were it attempted would have only insecure results. Whatever originates Christian experience must be handled in a distinct argument, or set of arguments. It is on the resulting phenomenon that this argument before us must rely. As a house cannot be employed to build itself, so Christian experience cannot be employed in this way. It may and must become an argument, when the Christian change is effected, and as it grows. But in the nature of things change cannot originate itself. There is a power in the Word of God which appeals to a susceptibility in the heart of man, as yet un-Christian, to be moved by it. This has sometimes been called the argument from Christian experience; but though this self-evidencing power is a reality, it is not happily described as an argument from Christian experience; and therefore I shall endeavour in what follows, to search out in the actual experiences of those who have become real Christians, the elements of an argument which may, while allowing for the place of every other, maintain its own distinctness and value.

The sources of this argument are not all of one

kind ; for the features of change in the history of Christians stand in different relations to the supernatural, so that they may be brought into contact with it at different points, at each of which they form parts of one complex argument for the Divine origin of Christianity. I shall, however, arrange them under the following propositions, beginning with that which is most prominent—the working in Christian experience of Divine power.

The sources of the argument various.

I. *First*, I say, that *the experience of Christians in passing through the change which all undergo involves a consciousness, which is not less than that of miracle.* This is the main thesis of this argument; but, in supporting it, I shall now break it up into separate propositions.

The main thesis of the argument.

(1) There has been in all Christians *a consciousness of innate antagonism to Christianity.* I shall take first that of those Christians in whom this will not be denied; and then that of others, in whom there may seem some ground for questioning it.

Consciousness of innate antagonism to Christianity.

Let us begin, then, with those vast multitudes of Christians who once felt a conscious and all too real antagonism to Christianity, and who have passed through what has been to themselves a sensible and memorable conversion. This must be the case of all who have come out of some other religion or system, as Judaism in its last development as hostile to Christianity, as all the forms of

Converts from other religions or systems.

Converts
from
Judaism,
cultured
Paganism,
modern
unbelief,
etc.

Nominal
Christians.

Paganism, ancient and modern, as Atheism, and all the types of unbelief which deny Christ's mission in any sense, as Mohammedanism, which formally admits it, but makes it void, and all the grades of heresy which do not contain enough of saving truth to produce Christian experience. This body of proselytes is already a large contingent of the ultimately true Christian Church. To this class belong the Apostle Paul and most of his converts, Justin Martyr and Clement of Alexandria, who came over from a cultured Paganism, the Earl of Rochester and Lord Lyttleton from modern unbelief, Neander from modern Judaism, Tholuck and Hengstenberg from Rationalism, and the innumerable converts on the field of recent missions, many of whom have become preachers of the Gospel. But a far larger body of this class have been born of nominally Christian parents, and have more or less received a Christian education. Very many of these have, till they became Christians indeed, lived in open sin and visible alienation from all semblance of Christian life and earnestness; and their conversion has had in it something marked and discernible, not only to themselves but to others. A large number also have shown beforehand the outward effect of Christian training in the possession of some measure of Christian knowledge, in attention to the forms of religion, and in a life of comparative decorum; but they have

been as to the great ends of existence unspiritual, and to their own inward eye, if not to the observation of others, at discord with living Christianity.

Now when one and all of those who form these vast masses of nominal adherents of Christianity, including those who have outwardly forsaken it at the one extremity, and those who have seemed to come nearer it at the other, actually undergo the Christian change, and come with proselytes from still darker regions into the inward pale, so that they become members of Christ's true flock, what is the verdict which they unanimously pass upon their former life and character? Is it not that of antagonism, and radical antagonism, to the truth as in Christ? They cannot call it by any other name than darkness, enmity, death. They acknowledge that they had no true and effectual persuasion, even of the things which had been taught them, and that as a matter of fact they had no desire for the benefits of the Gospel which had been brought near them. Hence it was that they repelled the offer of the pardon of their sins through Christ's redemption, and of a new and sanctifying power by the Holy Ghost. They had no real communion with God or desire for it, and whatever religious impressions had at any time been made on them had been stifled and repressed, so that they were practically without God and without hope in the world. This was the end of

The
verdict of
all true
Christians
on their
former
life and
character.

They were
without God
and without
hope.

every awakening of conscience and temporary conflict with a struggling element within them, that their recoil through pride, or evil desire, ending in confirmed unbelief, was stronger than before.

Augustine
and
Bunyan.

Antagonism
of sin and
grace.

John Owen.

John
Wesley.

Colonel
Gardiner.

William
Cowper and
John
Newton.

Now it will not be denied that these are the recollections of untold multitudes, who have sooner or later become true and earnest Christians. They are written for the earlier Church in Augustine's *Confessions*, and for the modern in Bunyan's *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners*. The distinctive feature of this widespread experience is the sharp antagonism of sin and grace. The memory of antagonism is at the foundation of their whole Christian history. As examples amongst innumerable others may be mentioned the great theologian, John Owen, suddenly brought out of deep gloom, by a sermon from an unknown preacher in London, to an experience of that Christian life which he was afterwards with such power to analyse; about a century afterwards John Wesley finding light from a humble Moravian reader of Luther's *Preface to the Romans*; Colonel Gardiner reclaimed in Paris by a wonderful conversion from an openly vicious life, to have his name the watchword as a soldier of Christian loyalty; the two friends, William Cowper and John Newton, each self-described as a monument of Almighty grace, and whose joint tribute to it in the "Olney Hymns" will only perish with the English

language ; to whom may be added, as of the same circle, Thomas Scott, the commentator, whose passage from ministerial deadness and negative belief is so strongly drawn in his *Force of Truth*; Adam Clarke, rescued by Methodist evangelism, at an early age in the north of Ireland, to be a commentator of equal name; William Hone and Thomas Cooper, in the last generation, and in this, reclaimed from passionate unbelief to be one the quiet confessor, and the other the public advocate of Christianity all over England. Let me close with a different name, Stephen Grellet, who passes from among the *noblesse* of the first French Revolution to the graver work of an American Friend, sending a Christian nurse to Thomas Paine in his last illness, and finding admission alike to Popes and crowned heads, to talk of the interests which had now displaced every other.

Thomas
Scott.

Adam
Clarke.

Hone and
Cooper.

Stephen
Grellet.

Nor will the existence of this antagonism, in a true and awful sense in the human heart, be disproved by facts of an apparently opposite character. There are many Christians who have been trained from their earliest years to understand and revere the Gospel, who have embraced Christianity with love and gratitude, as enforced by the consistent example of believing parents or other relatives and friends, and who have not only accepted all these doctrines and outward usages, but who have been taught to pray to a Father in Heaven through a

Cases
of early
piety.

Antagonism
overcome
antecedent
to the
working
of memory.

Incomplete-
ness of
victory in
the case
of early
converts.

Divine and living Saviour, and who have found through this communion the sense of pardon and the supply of strength for Christian duty. What does this, however, establish in regard to the non-existence of an original element of antagonism in Christians? Only that it might have been removed and overcome at a period antecedent to the working of memory, and that as conversion may be so real as entirely to change the character, the change may begin so soon as hardly to be distinguished from that which is earliest in nature. If there be two sets of facts which need to be harmonized with each other, which is the most rational explanation, that which supposes that only a portion of the human race are born with this antagonism with which they are so burdened, or that all have this heritage, but in the case of some it is by a happy influence earlier subdued? The view of a universal repulsion becomes a certainty, when it is found that in the case of the early converts the victory is sadly incomplete, that there are many reactions and falls into evil, darkening whole passages of their life, and that only by painful struggle and sore warfare, resembling the conversions of others, do these earlier disciples return to the path of consistency with their own professions and experiences. I am not here borrowing this explanation from cases in Scripture, or from general assertions in it, which include every type of character. I am pointing out

notorious facts, which are written in the consciousness of those Christians who cannot go back to a date when their Christianity seemed to begin, and who yet know all too well that it has had a wavering and chequered, even though, on the whole, a progressive history. Their own sense of reaction and struggle convinces them, in the same way in which others are convinced, that the Christian experiences are not innate in themselves, but successive to an earlier and hostile domination which seeks to regain the mastery, and no testimony would be more adverse to the theory of an inherent predisposition in any to Christianity, than that of the very persons who have soonest yielded to its influence. As in the Old Testament, the confession, "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity," comes, according to the prevailing view, from David, whose piety was of the earliest date, so in the New Testament, the consent of Timothy, who knew the Scriptures from "a babe," is presupposed by Paul to the assertion that all men need "to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth"; and the Apostle John, who is generally regarded as an example of early conversion, lays down as emphatically as any other the necessity of grace to save from universal depravity. "We love Him because He first loved us." "We know that we have passed from death unto life." "We know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness."

The sense of reaction and struggle in those who were Christians from childhood.

David.

Timothy.

The Apostle John.

Conscious-
ness of
harmony
with
Christianity
after con-
sciousness of
antagonism
to it.

The
degree of
hope or
assurance
felt im-
material.

The
tendency to
hopefulness
in all
Christians
normal.

(2) I remark, *secondly*, that the consciousness in all Christians of antagonism to Christianity is succeeded by a consciousness of harmony with it. I allow, of course, for degrees of development in true Christianity, since nothing is clearer from fact than that one Christian differs greatly from another, and the same Christian from himself in different stages. Nor would I draw any hard and fast line as to the amount of hope or assurance with which a Christian may at any time regard his own condition, as one bearing truly, however imperfectly, the Christian stamp and impress. We must grant that still the Much-afraids and Fearings belong to the race of true pilgrims as really as the Great-hearts and Valiants for the Truth. Still in all Christians, as there is a tendency towards progress, so is there a tendency towards hopefulness; and this we may describe as normal, so that in spite of all remaining conflict, the issue is that of harmony with Christianity displacing antagonism to it. Nor is it going too far to say that the Christian is entitled to look upon the highest point to which he has at any time attained in contrast with the lowest depth whence he started, as an evidence of the truth of Christianity, opening up, as it thus does, a possibility and even a future, which is the mark of a higher than earthly system. But even guarding this statement, as it needs to be guarded,

and founding only on the habitual difference between the former and present state of the Christian, there is, more or less, a response to the beautiful utterances of Scripture, "If any man be in Christ, there is a new creation: the old things are passed away; behold, they are become new;"¹ "ye were darkness, but are now light in the Lord;" "ye, who sometime were far off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ." The poles of existence have been reversed, and at every point the change reveals itself. Through the all-embracing, all-transforming principles of faith, Christ's word dominates in the convictions, regenerates the affections, re-moulds the active desires and purposes, so that it is a compendious description of this new life to say, "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me!" It is needless to enlarge on a newly-begotten harmony like this, which, though it may be painted too brightly as to its actual sweetness, is still, and justly, the theme of so much preaching; which is so great that it can never become common-place or indifferent, not to say that in the living Church its interest is kept up by perpetual accessions. Indeed, by the consent of men of the most opposite schools of thought, churches exist only to originate and develope this harmony with the will of Christ; and their ministers and ordinances, if they have any

The effects of Christ's words through faith.

Churches exist to produce harmony with the will of Christ.

¹ 2 Cor. v. 17, R.V.

function at all, are continued and renewed only to diffuse it. Thus the author of *Ecce Homo* says,

“When the power of reclaiming the lost dies out of the Church, it ceases to be the Church. It may remain a useful institution, though it is most likely to become an immoral and mischievous one. Where the power remains, there—whatever is wanting—it may be said that ‘the tabernacle of God is with man.’”¹

World-wide
renewal
demanded
by
Christianity.

From the opposite extreme, the same testimony to a world-wide renewal as demanded by Christianity, amidst all practical defection and failure, comes. Some years ago, when going into the bye-ways of a much-travelled part of Rhenish Prussia, I clambered up to the top of a hill, where with a tall cathedral in the midst, there stood an open square, surrounded by a wall, against which leaned an old wooden crucifix, with these lines carved upon it:

“Ex hoc crucis signo, ex hoc crucis ligno,
Venit penitenti, et contritæ menti,
Flos virtutis, fons salutis.”²

How
Christians
regard the
inward
change.

(3) I remark, *thirdly*, that all Christians regard the change, of which they are thus conscious, as having the nature of an inward miracle.³ To this

¹ p. 243.

² From this cross, the tree of shame,
From this cross, the cure of blame,
Comes to each repenting soul,
By a contrite faith made whole,
Virtue's flower, Salvation's dower!

³ I use the word “miracle” in this discussion advisedly. All Christians are agreed that the work of the Holy Ghost has

consciousness, the first Christians give clear and unequivocal utterance. I do not appeal now to their writings as inspired, for I am treating their words at this point solely as testimonies of human experience. Only it is worthy of notice, that in regarding this change as wrought by a special Divine power, they believed that they were interpreting the mind of their Master, who had pronounced on one of the first confessors the benediction, "Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven," who had promised to all His disciples the Spirit of truth, "whom the world could not receive;" and who had also announced that the same Spirit should act on the world to change it, by "convincing the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment." The first Christians accordingly had expected something marvellous in the working of spiritual power; they waited to be "endued" with it "from on high;" and on the Day of Pentecost, in answer, as they believed, to their prayers,

The
teaching of
Christ.

What
the first
Christians
expected.

in it a supernatural element, and that Christianity, however certain it be, and most important, that it acts by means of the truth, as is affirmed by all who deal with this question, and by none more than by our Lord Himself, would never accomplish its grand and soul-saving work, without a new force from a higher sphere, which is super-added to all other moral energies. It is this great fact, without going into further theory, which the word "miracle" is here employed to record with serious emphasis; and thus explained, its use will hardly be controverted.

The
mysterious
energy
recognised
in the
Acts and
Epistles.

it came, even with outward signs, but with a yet mightier force of inward transformation. All through the Acts of the Apostles, this mysterious energy is recognised; and in the Apostolical Epistles, where its working is more fully described, it is spoken of as truly of the nature of miracle. Thus, in a passage already referred to,¹ it is compared to creation: "If any man be in Christ, there is a new creation."² And again,³ "We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works." The miracle of resurrection and ascension is also declared to be repeated:⁴ "God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." Nay, in connexion with this emblem, to show that it is no mere figure, but a reality, the power in question is declared to be of the same miraculous kind which literally raised the Saviour:⁵ "And what is the exceeding greatness of His power to usward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places." I need

The
nature of
the power.

¹ 2 Cor. v. 17.

² R.V., *alternative*.

³ Eph. ii. 10.

⁴ Eph. ii. 4-7.

⁵ Eph. i. 19, 20.

hardly mention that another element of the supernatural, such as moved the incredulity of Nicodemus, enters with the figure of a second birth; for this image, which was more than once used by Christ Himself, re-appears in the teaching of His Apostles. Thus,¹ "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever." So,² "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin," and in other places. And the Apostle James³ traces the character and destiny of Christians to the same Divine birth, "of His own will begat He us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of His creatures."

The figure of the second birth.

I have quoted these testimonies in order to show how strong and uniform is the inference which is drawn by the first expounders of Christianity from their own experiences to a supernatural power working in the Church; and this view is evidently taken up and backed by those around them who professed to be partakers of their faith; for how could these statements have been universally regarded as true and canonical if no such thing had been generally known and admitted even by those who claimed to be Christians? By publishing these accounts of Christian experience, as implying miracle, these first writers placed themselves at the bar of Christian consciousness;

The universal belief of the early Christians in a supernatural power working in the Church.

The first Christian writers at the bar of Christian consciousness.

¹ 1 Pet. i. 23. ² 1 John iii 9. ³ i. 18.

and the fact that their descriptions are to this day accepted as authentic and indisputable makes the whole Christian body a voucher for the miraculous in its own subsequent experience. Were it not so, would not the Christian Church have given up these claims to the supernatural altogether, as too high-flown to have in them any reality at all, or have so reduced them as to make them fall within the line of mere ordinary persuasion and natural influence? The constant reading of the Bible, then, in Christian worship is from century to century an ever-renewed protestation that these wonders of moral creation, resurrection, and second birth are going on as of old, and are either great facts or grievous delusions. Nor is it only in the continued reading of Scripture texts, and the founding of sermons upon them, pointed so as to include a present miracle, that these utterances soar so high. In the prayers of the Church for the same working, and in the solemn thanksgiving in which it is acknowledged, there is a complete identification in this respect of the present days with the past. The most effectual, too, of creeds—the living hymns of the Church—repeat the same sense of Divine operation; and of these hymns there are none which more eloquently attest it than those that are directly addressed to the Holy Ghost, such as the “*Veni Creator Spiritus*,” ascribed to Charlemagne, and

The
continuance
of the
wonders of
moral
creation.

The
sermons,
prayers
and hymns
of the
Church
renew this
sense of
the Divine
operation.

taken up into all Christian hymnology, and the not less exquisite one of Robert II., of France, one verse especially of which was appealed to by the Reformers, as witnessing for the more earnest view of spiritual influence which after the decay of the Middle Ages they sought to revive :

“Sine tuo numine
Nihil est in homine,
Nihil est innoxium.”¹

This dependence of a humanity confessedly depraved and fallen upon the regenerating and sanctifying influence of the Holy Spirit has been, as an article of universal Christian belief and experience, undoubtedly strengthened by the controversies which have taken place in regard to it in the history of Christianity. These it is not necessary in a tract like this to recapitulate, arising, as they have done, not merely from the resistance of nominal Christians in the Christian Church to a doctrine in every form offensive to human pride and self-sufficiency, but also from the anxieties of Christians themselves not to suffer the doctrines of Divine grace and human responsibility, which they equally sought to hold, to encroach upon each other. How far the confessedly great difficulties of this problem as a

The need of regeneration and sanctification.

The doctrines of Divine grace and human responsibility.

¹ “For without Thee nought we find
Pure or strong in human kind,
Nought that has not gone astray.”

MACGILL, *Songs of the Christian Life*, p. 55.

Present
feeling with
reference to
the doctrine
of the Holy
Spirit.

The
antagonism
overcome
in the
Christian
change
deep and
radical.

question of theology have been surmounted, it is not for me here to say ; but I am convinced that at no former period was there a greater practical anxiety among all sections of Christians to deal in earnest with the words of the oldest creed, the Apostolic so-called, " I believe in the Holy Ghost," and to hold up what is found in the 7th article of the " Evangelical Alliance," " the work of the Holy Spirit in the conversion and sanctification of the sinner." Hence I think that were a Christian anywhere, on appealing to his own experiences of inward change as a proof of a Divine working upon his soul, to be met with the reply on the part of one who did not profess to be a Christian, that there was in all this nothing more than the power of self-originated transition which lay in passing from one political party, or from one school in philosophy, or from one side in any of the fields of art or literature to another, the objector would not find another Christian who would take up and support his argument. It would be felt at once that the antagonism overcome in the Christian change was of a deep and radical character, to which, in the other cases, there was no parallel. A surrender had been demanded for Christ, to which there was nothing equivalent in the acceptance of human leaders and masters, and there had been in the one case a previous thralldom to the world and its lord, and a recoil

even from truth and liberty, as the soul came at length to understand them, compared with which all secular partizanship was feeble. Christians, too, have undergone changes from one school in philosophy or science or taste to another; but, in comparison with the Christian change, they will one and all declare that these affected only the surface of their being, that the only revolution had been the Christian, and that across that awful but joyful passage of an eternal deliverance nothing but an Almighty arm could have brought them safely. Amongst earnest Christians the inapplicability of this whole parallel would not admit of serious debate, and any Christian who might seem even to countenance it would lie open to the suspicion that he was himself still in the shallows, and had been only outwardly "baptized in the cloud and in the sea."

Other
changes
only
superficial.

Nor would any more success attend the effort to evade this argument from the felt supernatural nature of the Christian change, by tracing it up to the force of human eloquence or persuasion in those by whom it had been instrumentally helped. No doubt this has its own place amidst Christian influences, as it has in what may be called secular conversions. It belongs to human nature in the sphere of Christian argument, as in other spheres, to be moved by sympathy and melted by tears. But such an origin of the ultimate difference

The
force of
eloquence
and
persuasion
no adequate
explanation
of the
Christian
change.

between one hearer and another will not be accepted by any Christian, when it is remembered how often the most persuasive lips have failed, and how "the weak things of the world have been chosen to confound the things that are mighty."

The
inherent
power of
outward
revelation,
without
the Holy
Spirit
inadequate.

Nor would Christians rest in one other explanation, which might seem to detract from the miracle-like origin of Christian conviction and life, that namely which traces it up to the mere inherent power of the outward revelation, without implying any additional energy as exerted by the Divine Spirit. Even that explanation goes beyond a purely naturalistic origin of Christian experience; for it demands a revealed word to act upon the soul, and this—the distinctive feature of Pelagianism, which will grant nothing more—already separates it from an absolutely rationalized and humanly originated Christian experience. Still, as the Christian Church has always felt, this alleged sufficient energy of Scripture, as detached from inward struggles and workings of the Holy Ghost, has constantly been left aside by a living and practical Christianity, and the prayer of the Church has always been that the Gospel might come, "not in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance."¹

The
constant
prayer of
the Church.

Nor has any practical difficulty been caused to Christians, in accepting and maintaining the con-

¹ 1 Thess. i. 5.

viction that they were in their inward experiences each the subject of a true miracle, by the fact that the miracle was not abrupt and absolute, but connected with the use of means, and these means, the manifestation of truth to mind and heart. Such a complication in no way excludes the supernatural element of power, any more than the use of food by Elijah excluded the higher vigour that enabled him to go on for forty days to Mount Horeb. In the texts which have been quoted, the presence of the word and the power of the Spirit stand together in the closest association. It is easy to believe that a complex miracle of this kind may be even greater than one involving the immediate exercise of power. Christ is commonly understood to have predicted that His Apostles in their ministry would do greater works than He did,¹ in the sense that their teaching would be accompanied by greater manifestations of the Spirit's power in the conversion of men: "Greater works than these shall he do, because I go unto My Father." As a matter of fact, there is nothing therefore in this conjunction of spiritual energy with human teaching to limit the sense of transcendent obligation implied in the conviction of every Christian, "By the grace of God I am what I am; and the grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain!"

The
spiritual
miracle
connected
with the
use of
means.

Christ's
prediction
about the
work of His
Apostles

¹ John xiv. 12.

Christian
experience
a fulfilment
of prophecy

Three
elements in
prophecy

The
continuance
of con-
version
described
beforehand.

II. The *second* general proposition which I lay down is *that the change involved in Christian experience authenticates Christianity, as a revelation, since this change is the fulfilment of prophecy.* Hitherto I have spoken of this change as miracle, and as fulfilling tests and conditions of miracle, so as to supply an additional and most important chapter to that argument. I have now to show that the change that takes place in every Christian is fitted to produce in him all the effect and impression of prophecy. Now in prophecy there are three elements, a pre-intimation; a supernatural range; and a fulfilment; and these all meet in Christian experience. The change is announced in the Word of God, it could not be foretold without Divine intelligence; and the forecast comes to pass actually in Christian experience. It is not indeed, as in the ordinary argument from prophecy, that a particular converting change is announced beforehand. It is not said that A. B. or C. will be turned into a Christian, but the continuance of conversion in the world is described beforehand. This could not be done without Divine foreknowledge of the future; and as one who is not a Christian never seriously believes or even understands these preannouncements, they start up, when in his own case they prove true, with all the effect of supernatural insight. Thus, when any one is, it may be, quite unexpectedly convinced of sin,

our Lord's prophecy as to the Spirit coming to convince the world of sin, startles as a Divine voice; so again, when the Apostle's divinely-given work is continued in any one of our sinful race, "to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness unto light, and from the power of Satan unto God,"¹ there is the same sense of contact with a divinely-arranged system; or again when, in the most general way, it is declared that "the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation";² for here is a sinner in his actual life and history made to experience this, and to see not only a Divine Hand accomplishing it, but writing it beforehand in all the largeness and confidence of a world-wide prophecy of which he himself has become a monument. And not only is there in all converts this element of surprise and confirmation, but the impression is more particularly strengthened where there is set forth some condition to be fulfilled, and when, on the fulfilling of it, the result held out is found to be realised. These may be called promises, but they are also prophecies; and the fulfilment of them strikes with direct efficacy. Thus, when it is promised,³ "If any man willeth to do His will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it be of God," Christians know that in proportion as they have reached this

The effect of the prophetic description on the awakened soul.

Promises which are prophecies

¹ Acts xxvi. 18.

² Rom. i. 16.

³ John vii. 17, R. V.

Examples.

Scripture
ministers
to the self-
knowledge of
Christians.

willingness, in the same degree has the truth of Christ's doctrine dawned upon them. So, again, when it is said by Christ,¹ "Learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls," it is the universal experience of Christians that the more lowly, as Christ was, they strive to become, the more do they enter into rest. And once more, in the case of a promise like this, the same result follows,² "Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full." These are but examples of many profound and far-reaching prophecies, and prophecies that make every part of Scripture brighten into an oracle. There is also a further consideration of great importance, that it is not knowledge of the future only that authenticates Scripture, but any knowledge contained in it that transcends the compass of our natural intelligence. And as Scripture thus ministers to the endless self-knowledge of all Christians, revealing to the regenerate all their temptations, infirmities, and falls, and not less their recoveries, struggles, aspirations, and groanings which cannot be uttered, it stretches out like an untravelled continent beyond the ken of our highest literature, and yet supplies even to the unlettered saint a field of discovery—sad and yet most hopeful—which daily assures him that he is in contact with the mind of God.

III. The *third* and last proposition which I lay

¹ Matt. xi. 29.

² John xvi. 24.

down is that the argument from the experience of Christians confirms the argument for Christianity derived from the supernatural character of the life and work of Jesus Christ. Whatever tends to prove Jesus Christ a real and also a more than mortal being, is a contribution to the argument for the Divine origin of the Gospel. It is not enough indeed to prove Him to have been simply historical, for an historical being of the mere reduced proportions of Him who is drawn by Renan or any other of the naturalist school, is no support to the Christ of the Christian Church. But anything which connects this higher and true Christ of Christianity with history is a positive argument. Now, this connexion is established on the field of Christian experience. There is, indeed, independent and earlier evidence for the historical reality of a Christ who transcends all merely natural greatness and goodness. He is proved by the quite unique character of the picture, which, as Rousseau long ago confessed, defies all invention. And still more, he is proved by the narratives of eye-witnesses, which show that the portrait is not a free sketch, but a transcript drawn from reality. If no Church had subsequently been founded at all, that would not have invalidated the historical character of a personality so grand who was attested in such a manner. It would have been a difficulty if He had appeared alone, and seemed to

The argument from experience confirms the argument from the supernatural character of Christ's life and work.

The character of Christ defies invention.

The succession of disciples bearing His image strengthens the argument for Christ's reality.

fail in His mission, so far as the succession of followers was concerned. But now, by the raising up of a succession of disciples who bear His character and image, the argument for His own reality is indefinitely strengthened. And not only is it strengthened to others, who can see Christianity from the outside, but far more to those who can see it from within, and who, putting together Christ's character and their own, see, that with all their failures, Christ's character so interprets and accounts for their own that they can no more deny that He existed, and was what He was, than they can deny their own existence. Christ, by this living reproduction of Himself in them, as they know themselves, and can compare the picture with what they read, asserts His place in the grand series of historical influences that have moulded the world; and as all Christians are equally affected, the impression is indefinitely enhanced. But this is far from being all; this is not even the most wonderful fact in connexion with this great Person. They believe, one and all of them, that they are actually in contact with a still living Saviour, who has risen from the dead, and who presides over history, according to His own words, "All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth." "Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world." They connect this presence with the promised coming of

Christians in contact with a living Saviour.

the Holy Spirit, as another Comforter, the representative of Christ, by whom He should dwell in their hearts, and manifest Himself to them, as He does not unto the world ; and thus the foundation is laid for prayer, for guidance, for spiritual sympathy, such as cannot connect any other body of men, Brahmans, Buddhists, Mohammedans, with a religious Founder, and which exists in Christianity alone. For this presence the guarantee to the Christian is the possession of the new character, which is the reflection of that of Christ according to His own word : “ He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me : and he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love Him, and will manifest Myself to him.” To the world which disowns a living and reigning Christ, accessible to prayer, ruling in the hearts of His people, and actually sealing them as His own by this Spirit who dwells and works in them, this may seem altogether transcendental ; but to the Christian it is the centre of a new and blessed life ; and thus, as a great fact in history, repeated in the experience of all Christians, it vouches for the foregoing fact of Christ’s own life in all its real and yet solitary grandeur. The Christian, therefore, must be allowed to dwell on this supreme and governing presence of One who was dead, but is alive for evermore. When Julian was on his march to the

The presence of Christ connected with the coming of the Holy Spirit.

The presence of Christ the centre of a new and blessed life to the Christian.

Faith
in the
incarnation
and history
of Christ
maintained
by this
presence.

Persian war, one of his soldiers asked an aged Christian, according to one of the Church historians, "What is your carpenter doing now?" to which the answer was, "He is making a coffin for your emperor." In the Indian mutiny, a Christian convert, when tortured even to death, on being interrogated, "Where is your Jesus Christ now?" gave this reply, "He is in my heart." It is this ineradicable belief that the Saviour is present by a mysterious but real communion with all true Christians, strengthened by the inward feeling of nearness and likeness, that maintains, as it could not otherwise be maintained, the faith of the Church in His incarnation and earthly history, and seems evermore to fulfil all His own promises or prophecies which guarantee such a contact. "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it." Is this, then, the mere after-glow of a fallen sun, or even the personification of a purely moral guardianship?

"I hear a voice you cannot hear,
I see a hand you cannot see."

Uses of the
argument
from
experience.

IV. Having thus endeavoured as briefly as possible to state the argument from Christian experience for the Divine origin generally of Christianity as a Revelation, I have now to mention *some uses*,

which in connexion with this great issue it is fitted to serve. I shall confine myself to three. It is a help to establish the sufficiency and supremacy of Holy Scripture. It assists Christians to recognise each other. And it affords a starting-point for impression on the world.

(1) *The argument from Christian experience helps, firstly, to establish the sufficiency and supremacy of Holy Scripture.* Not, indeed, that the very words of Scripture are necessary to convey the truth by which, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, the soul may be inwardly touched and changed. The words of a human minister or friend, freely translating and with general fidelity re-producing those of Scripture, have often been effectual; and thus the witness borne by saving changes is not to the bare letter of Scripture; nor has the Romanist against the Protestant any topic of alarm, as if without an infallible Church, and a minutely watchful tradition, no one could be sure of what he believed. But while this is true, so true that by a single verse of Scripture, and that not reproduced accurately in detail, a soul may be converted, it is not less true that, as a matter of fact, saving changes are far more frequently originated in connexion with texts of Scripture than in any other way, and Christians come to learn that what is most central and decisive in their experience is built up far more by the direct teaching of

Establishes
the
sufficiency
and
supremacy
of Holy
Scripture.

Conversions
generally
connected
with texts
of Scripture

Consensus
about books
that have
commended
themselves
to the
conscience.

Scripture than through human variations upon it. In this way the external evidence of the Canon as resting upon the testimony of those who claim to speak with authority as Christ's apostles, or otherwise qualified witnesses, is greatly helped by the remembrance of what these words have been to, and done for, those to whom they have come with power; and as the experience of Christians is substantially the same, there is thus a *consensus*, as a matter of fact and induction, respecting the books that have commended themselves to the conscience, and have been received not as the word of man, but as "the word of God, which effectually worketh in them that believe." Thus, while on the one hand the awful prerogative cannot be claimed for the words of the sacred writings as the vehicle of inspiration exclusively to convey saving influence, or for the Church to watch over and define that vehicle with unerring authority; on the other hand, that which can claim the homage due to inspiration is, by its effects on the soul, still more visibly exalted, and the testimony of Christians with reference to such effects converges with a prevailing consent upon the writings which are by other indications singled out as recording the revelation of God. This witness to Scripture, by its enlightening, sanctifying, and comforting effects upon the souls of believers, I understand to be the *testimonium spiritus Sancti*

The
testimonium
spiritus
Sancti.

so celebrated in the theology and in the confessions of the Reformation.

(2) *The argument from Christian experience has a second use in enabling Christians to recognise each other.* This recognition might be brought about for its own sake, and it is obvious that it would be an end worthy of God, both for its bearing on the Divine glory, and for the joy that it would give to Christians when they found that they were not alone in the world, but were children of the same family, and servants of the same Lord. There is an element of higher romance than existed in the days of chivalry in the way in which Christians come, in the greatest outward disguise to discover their common knight-hood, and to breathe their loyalty to each other. But this is a more than accidental privilege and kindling of hearts. The Christian Church is based on this recognition, for, without this common character thus revealed, Christians could not be formed into a Christian Church, for the confession, the communication, and the increase of the faith. It would be possible upon this use of a common character to found another argument for the Divine origin of a religion which reveals a wisdom transcending all parallel; for the possession of national character does not so qualify for national duties, or the more external affinities and watch-words of other religions so fit their votaries to

Mutual
recognition
of
Christians.

The
Christian
Church
based on the
mutual
recognition
of
Christians.

The
depth and
cohesion of
the elements
of unity in
Christian
society.

Mr. Ellis of
Madagascar
and the
South Sea
Islander.

Christian
unity
enhanced by
differences.

stand by and even to suffer for each other. In the Christian society the elements of unity go down to the depths of being, and produce a cohesion over which death has no power. Hence there has been something marvellous in the sudden and yet self-evidencing unveilings of Christians to each other. One illustration will serve for a thousand. When the Rev. William Ellis was going out in his later years to Madagascar, a drowning man was picked up by the vessel, who had fallen from another ship. It was some time before he could speak, and when he could, it was in a language entirely strange. At length Mr. Ellis recognised in it the speech of a far-away South-Sea group, with which his youthful labours had made him familiar, and found in the rescued man a Christian brother. Thus are Christians, as all using the speech of Canaan, fitted to be formed into visible churches, based on the recognition of Christian character; and though differences remain, these only enhance the underlying unity. Nor are these without another use, for they teach Christians a lesson of charity, when they see that it is not the plan of Christ that all His true people should throughout agree; and they learn also by a comparison of their agreements and differences with Scripture, that they agree in that which is most important and differ in that which is less vital. Thus the tendency of personal experience

to run into self-confidence and individualism is checked by a wider induction; and the Scripture remains a higher rule than even these generally consenting testimonies of Christians. The Church has a practical basis for worship and witness bearing, and all her other work, in the ascertained harmonies of experience; and yet this urges her to continued advance through the study of Scripture. When Kant, in 1781, published his *Critique of Pure Reason*, he dedicated it to Baron von Zedlitz, the minister of Public Instruction in Prussia. The Baron wrote him,

Ascertained harmonies of experience furnish a practical basis for worship and work.

“I have not been able to understand all that is in your book, and feel that I need some instruction from yourself. I am like a student who sits too far from the desk, and my *Heft* (Note-book) needs to be corrected.”

So, too, Churches and Christians make a bad *Heft* by sitting too far from the desk; for when their experience is too little based on one original, it admits too little of mutual recognition. As they come back to the Word of God, the Spirit of Christ, who copies it variously in them all, makes their unities increase, and through these all the offices and functions of the one great body, with the sense of “this effectual working in the measure of every part,” necessarily go forward to the edifying of the whole in love.

Christian experience affords a starting point for impression on the world.

(3) *The third and last use claimed here for Christian experience is to afford a starting point for impression on the world. Though in the deepest*

Strauss's
view of the
impression
made on
St. Paul
by what he
saw in the
Christian
assemblies.

Lingering
memories of
impressions
received
from
Christian
testimony.

sense an argument for Christians, it has also a side for unbelievers. It is often said that the experience of Christians is incommunicable to them; and this in their present state is so far true. But is it not the fact that the very greatness of Christian experience also moves them? Are they not capable of discerning and so far appreciating the revolution wrought in the character of those who were once their own associates? Strauss represents the impression, made on the Apostle Paul by what he saw in the Christian assemblies which he invaded, as so deep, that it paved the way for his belief in the Resurrection. Thus it is still, and while the greatness of the change strikes, so also does the unity of the product, as expressed in every form of Christian testimony, not only in public worship and confession, but in the most private records of Christian biography, such as letters and diaries, and even the appeals of friendship, in which many a Christian pleads with others to follow in the track of his own decision. The world of the undecided is filled with these haunting memories and thoughts, where perhaps it may be least expected and many an opponent, and even a persecutor may be agitating the question which Strauss put into the mouth of the yet unconverted Saul, "Who is after all on the right side, thou or the crucified Galilean, of whom these enthusiasts speak?" Thus, through the workings of conscience, and

these strivings of a higher Power, the experiences of Christians struggle to communicate themselves. The communication is begun, and would be carried farther, were it not thwarted and repressed through the fault of those who resist its working. Is there not here then a hint and an encouragement to all Christians to proceed in their great work of converting the world to Christ, not only in the memories of what they have experienced themselves through that grace to which nothing is impossible, but in the anticipation of finding amidst deep and lamentable indifference an unsuspected tremor of susceptibility? May they not also be instructed how to meet this hidden want and craving? For all experience shows that when the soul is truly awakened, its saddest burden is not of man's sin against his neighbour (though this also has a large share), but of ingratitude and trespass against his God and Saviour. To this need, then, the redemption of Christ must be first held forth, and the remedy of reconciliation and regeneration, pointed to in the treasure of Christian experience, must be most earnestly applied. For Christianity is not a sociology but a soteriology; and it is a soteriology, *i.e.*, a science of salvation, only as it is a Theology and a Christology. It is as it brings into the world the mighty shadow of God and the saving image of Jesus Christ, that it heralds peace on earth and good-will to-

Christian
experience
struggles to
communicate
itself.

The
burden of
the
awakened
soul.

Christianity
a science of
salvation.

It comes as
a baptism of
repentance
for the
remission
of sins.

wards men. Then, however needful in all ages, and in none more than our own, the display of its power to heal all the social wrongs and woes of men, it comes most effectually as a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins; and with its transcendent light from the Cross that brightens eternity, it touches at every point the horizon of time, and makes all things new.



EGOISM, ALTRUISM,
AND
CHRISTIAN EUDAIMONISM

BY THE
REV. M. KAUFMAN, M.A.

Argument of the Tract.

NATURE of the controversy stated. The charge against Christianity considered. Examination of the terms of the controversy, Egoism and Eudaimonism, to distinguish legitimate from illegitimate forms of Egoism, and explanation of the nature of the future life principle in Christian Ethics. Then follows a comparative view of Altruism, as taught by Christianity, and the modern substitutes proposed in its place to disprove the claim of superiority of the latter over the former. The character and teaching of Christ, and the life and labour of Christians, are adduced in evidence of this.

The Tract then changes its position from apologetic argument to direct attack on the insufficiency and inferiority of rival systems to Christianity, showing that the Eudaimonistic views of the universe, of human conduct and a future life, as taught by Christianity, can alone solve satisfactorily the great problems of life.

In conclusion, the Tract shows from the general character of the Beatitudes in Christ's Sermon on the Mount, that the blessedness of the righteous in life and death, taught in the Christian scheme as the result of "holy living" and "holy dying," so far from being anti-social and selfish, leaning on the "individualistic eudaimonistic crutch," which modern opponents discard, acts rather as a healthy stimulant to self-improvement and social amelioration, and beyond this subserves the purpose of fitting man, not only for the fixed or varying conditions of society in the life that now is, but also training him by means of these, and the discipline they afford for the heavenly society of that which is to be. The teaching of Christianity on the points in controversy, is clearly indicated throughout the whole Tract.

EGOISM, ALTRUISM, & CHRISTIAN EUDAIMONISM.



I.

MODERN VIEWS OF POPULAR CHRISTIANITY.



THE conscious effort to attain individual happiness, is in the present day stigmatised as egoism, and is held up to universal contempt by an influential class of writers as far below the elevated level of modern ethics.

The effort to attain happiness despised by many in the present day.

The egoistical theory is "the favourite bugbear of ethical writers," and a new term, viz., Altruism, has been invented for the very purpose of protesting against it. To live for others, for that is the meaning of Altruism, is represented as far nobler than the pursuit of selfish aims. Popular Christianity is said to be selfish, and not social in its tendencies, and its exhortations to overcome self are enforced, it is added, by an appeal to selfish motives. Thus the natural tendency to attach supreme importance to individual happiness, both now and hereafter, is asserted to receive too much encouragement.

The alleged selfishness of Christianity.

Christian Eudaimonism is represented as a

The
alleged
detrimental
effects of
Christian
beliefs.

cheerful view, from the point of self, of things as they are in this world, of its constitution and moral government: *i.e.*, that all things are for the best so far as *we* are concerned; while it includes a cheering hope extending beyond this life to the world to come, that all will be well with us hereafter.¹ Christian beliefs are charged with being selfish in their practical effect, with leading men to try to make the best of both worlds for themselves, to the detriment of social improvement and the moral development of the individual. Social duties, it is said, are apt to be forgotten when each man pursues his own selfish interests, and thinks that the community will be best served and happiness and harmony will naturally result in a state of society of which the principle is that everyone should do the best he can to improve his own condition. It is also argued that the progress of disinterested virtue is seriously impeded by mingling duty and interest—well-

¹ Eudaimonism comes from the Greek *εὐδαιμονία*, prosperity, good luck, happiness (from *εὐδαίμων*, "with a good genius"). Socrates and Plato use it to express man's well-being or welfare, or happiness as the concomitant of goodness (see Sidgwick's *History of Ethics*, p. 48). Cicero considered *εὐδαιμονία* or *beata vita*, a happy life, to be the consequent of virtue, though the Stoics generally placed virtue before happiness; or at best, believed them to be concurrent, *i.e.*, virtue and happiness as co-existing, rather than in the light of cause and consequence, see *Ibid.* pp. 94-6). Plotinus, speaking in the name of the Neo-Platonists, says: "We lay it down that happiness (*τὸ εὐδαιμονεῖν*) belongs to well-living (*εἶναι ζῆν*), and therefore, whilst assigning pleasure to animals, denies them the possession of happiness which is peculiar to rational and moral beings.

doing and well-being. Evangelical Christianity is thus said to foster habits of self-preservation by encouraging the individual to make isolated efforts for the salvation of his own soul. "Egoistic valetudinarianism"—"coddling one's own soul," are the phrases used to describe all introspective efforts after spiritual advancement.

Charges
against
Evangelical
Christianity.

In the various forms of Christian asceticism the same objectors see nothing else but "anodynes for self-torment," or wretched efforts to flee from the wrath to come; whilst Christian idealists, taking for their motto, "Our conversation (citizenship) is in heaven," are contrasted unfavourably with the modern pioneers of civilization, such as Watt and Stephenson, who

Christian
asceticism
disparaged.

Contrast
drawn
between
Christian
idealists and
Watt and
Stephenson.

"drew their inspiration from a source less tainted with the fumes of even a noble *egoism*. They loved their science for its own sake; they simply obeyed the dictates of a sound nature; they exercised their talents, they followed their instincts, thinking of their work, not of themselves, nor even much probably of their works' ulterior results of civilizing beneficence; but in acting thus, they did what God had sent them into the world to do, and so, half unconsciously, but still religiously, because straightforwardly and dutifully, fulfilled the purposes of their existence."¹

Christians are exhorted to take these as their examples, to be henceforth satisfied with efforts for the realization of the highest social type, instead of giving way to the temptation to selfish ease in contemplative religion, or dreaming life

Exhorta-
tion to
Christians.

¹ See W. R. Greg's "Literary and Social Judgments." Essay on *Good People* (People's Ed.) p. 408.

away in the airy altitudes of "intellectual mysticism." Thus Professor Karl Pearson, in his work on the *Ethics of Free Thought*, says on p. 369 :

"The little streak of social good which each man may leave behind him—the only immortality of which mankind may be sure—is a far nobler result of labour, whether of hand or head, than threescore years of unlimited personal happiness."

Religious visionaries, it is said or implied, in their selfish search for present and future enjoyment, neglect this duty of rendering the existence of myriads of human beings more tolerable.

Christianity
charged with
sanctioning
inadequate
forms of
morality.

All this constitutes the serious charge against Christianity of lending a religious sanction to those lower forms of morality which no longer satisfy the requirements of modern thought, of becoming the abettor of "ethical materialism," in spite of its spiritual pretensions, of engendering general disregard of altruistic duties, and lessening the power of sympathy in reducing it to a kind of reflected self-pity. In this way private charity and public philanthropy, it is asserted, are resorted to as easy methods of soothing the susceptibilities of conscience when roused from its perennial slumber of sated optimism. Speaking of the doctrine which Rousseau takes for granted in his strictures on Voltaire, viz. :

"that if it is well with me, and I am free from calamities, then there must needs be a beneficent ruler of the universe, and the calamities of all the rest of the world, if by chance they catch the fortunate man's eye, count for nothing in an estimate of the method of the supposed Divine Government ;"—

Mr. John Morley says, — and he seems to have intended his words to have a wider application than to the “religiosity” of Rousseau, — “It is hard to imagine a more execrable emotion than the complacent religiosity of the prosperous”¹—dwarfing the soul wrapt up in self, and producing, in the long run, utter worldliness, or, at best, honest, though inconsistent and intermittent efforts to attain spiritual abstraction, described as “*other-worldliness*” — “a self-seeking, where reward is placed in a loftier sphere and fixed at a higher rate, but an undisguised self-seeking still.”² Here ordinary duties are represented as forgotten in the contemplation of celestial beatitudes, and those so engaged in “star-gazing” as losing their footing on the solid ground of sublunary obligations. How inferior, it is argued, are the professors of Christianity in this respect, both in their aims and efforts, to modern Pessimists and Positivists, Scientific Theists, or even Atheists and Agnostics, who one and all spurn the idea of making “happiness our being’s end and aim,” who are ready to perform the stern duties and to bear the severe trials of life without the consolations of religion and without the comforting assurance of a final restitution of all things! In fact, according to this view, the hopelessness of their faith adds to the

Mr. John Morley’s strictures on the “religiosity” of the prosperous.

The alleged inferiority of professing Christians to Pessimists, Positivists, etc.

¹ J. Morley, *Rousseau*, vol. I., p. 317 (Ed., 1873).

² Greg, *loc. cit.*, p. 401.

intensity of their compassionate love for fellow sufferers and their tender pity for sorrowing fellow-mortals.¹ From their self-effacing readiness to ease suffering and lessen sorrow, to relieve the wants of others without any thought of self, let Christians learn the higher "Ethics of Pain" in the art of self-extinction for others' good!

II.

THE CHARGE AGAINST CHRISTIANITY CONSIDERED.

Is there
truth in the
charges?

WHAT truth is there in this severe indictment? Does Christianity really encourage egoism? Is the charge borne out either by a comparative view of the ethics of belief and the ethics of unbelief, or by the life and teaching of Christ and His genuine followers? And if not, are we not entitled to abandon the position of the mere defence of Christianity and to assume the offensive against the position of our opponents, to maintain that the Christian view of the universe as making on the whole for happiness and harmony, that the basis and aims of Christian ethics, the Christian doctrine of the duty of happiness and the happiness of duty well performed, and Christian Eschatology, or belief in the powers of the world to come, give Christianity a place of absolute preeminence as a philosophy of

Are not
Christians
entitled to
assume the
offensive?

¹ See George Eliot. *Essays.*

life, a system of morality, and a speculative creed affecting man's future existence?

(a) *The Terms of the Controversy.*

A few preliminary remarks on Egoism and Eudaimonism are necessary in order to clear the terms of the controversy from all ambiguity of meaning. By defining the legitimate rights of self-love, and distinguishing between those forms of egoism which are not only lawful and expedient, but even essential to human existence, and the selfishness which is as incompatible with it as it is inconsistent with the plain teaching of the New Testament, we may remove at once the most unreasonable objections to Christianity as teaching an "egoistic pseudo-morality." In the same way, by defining more clearly the Christian idea of happiness, the quest of happiness beyond the confines of this life, we shall be able to give an answer to those who accuse Christianity of teaching an ignoble eudaimonism, namely, that good is to be done for the sake of the enjoyment it brings, and who stigmatise what they represent to be the Christian hope of immortality as "so gross, so sensual, so indolent, so selfish a creed, as to be worthy of nothing but scorn."¹

Legitimate
egoism and
unscriptural
selfishness
to be dis-
tinguished.

The
Christian
idea of
happiness
to be
defined.

There is no need for dwelling here on those lower

¹ Frederic Harrison "On the Soul and Future Life," *Nineteenth Century*, July, 1877, p. 841.

forms of selfishness which, either directly or by implication, are condemned in the New Testament.¹

The Gospel condemns self-seeking at the expense of others.

The spirit of the Gospel is entirely ignored and misrepresented whenever a man uses every effort to promote his own welfare at the expense of the welfare of others, or consciously endeavours to promote the general good simply for his own profit. The Gospel, in fact, reserves its most emphatic condemnation for such attempts. And it must be admitted that one of the dangers of the present day is the growth of excessive individualism. Such is one of the features of the grievous times of which St. Paul speaks, viz.: that men shall be "*lovers of self.*"²

Dangers of excessive individualism.

There are signs, however, of a coming salutary change in the public conscience, which of late years has been awakened to a much higher sense of altruistic duty. Far be it from us to excuse those who call themselves Christians, and yet make no attempt to curb their selfish propensities.³ Selfishness is utterly incompatible

Signs of salutary change in the public conscience.

¹ See e.g. Rom xv. 1, 2; 1 Tim. v. 6. ² 2 Tim. iii. 2, 3, R.V.

³ Take for example the words of "The Prophet of Walnut Tree Yard," quoted in Dr. Jessopp's work on *The Coming of the Friars*, as an extreme case in the 17th century, though the spirit of it is not quite extinct in the 19th century: "I was so well satisfied in my mind as to *my eternal happiness* that I was resolved now to be quiet and to get as good a living as I could in the world, and live as comfortably as I could here, thinking that this revelation should have been *beneficial to nobody but myself.*" For this reason, the consciousness of the soul's safety, says Louis Blanc somewhere, the Protestants of the Anglo Saxou

with a sincere profession of Christianity. True, the idea of personality and the dignity of the individual, and with it the psychological character of modern ethics, owe their origin to the spread of Christianity and the revival of primitive Christianity at the time of the Reformation. But the excesses of individualism flow rather from the principles of the French Revolution and "the rights of man" as formulated at that time. "Every man is both an individual and a social product, and every instinct both social and self-regarding." Such is the balanced statement of the author of the *Science of Ethics*. But Christianity goes beyond this in emphasising altruistic duty, and does not leave it to natural instincts, which, as the whole course of history shows, are an utterly insufficient barrier against selfish propensities. Its authoritative demand is: "Look not every man to his own things, but every man also on the things of others; let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus," etc.¹ Obedience to this rule would limit egoistic desires without destroying individuality itself.

The idea of personality and the dignity of the individual due to the spread of Christianity.

Natural instincts an insufficient barrier against selfish propensities.

(b) *Individualism and Egoism Distinguished.*

And here it is important to draw a distinction

¹ Phil. ii. 4, 5, and 29.

race, devoting their whole time to the acquisition of temporary treasures, have been so successful in trade and commerce.

Individualism and Egoism distinguished.

De Tocqueville's description of them.

The motto of modern individualism.

The Christian ideal.

between Individualism and Egoism, which did not escape such a writer as De Tocqueville in his remarks on the tendencies of Individualism in the United States. Egoism, as he points out, easily degenerates into passionate self-regard, which exaggerates the importance of self as compared with others, whilst individualism may be only a peaceful retirement from the outside world and a preference for life in the family, or small circle of selected friends, self-centred within the larger circle of the community. This kind of individualism develops with the growth of democratic sentiment, but as the same writer shows, finds its corrective in religion.¹ In America, as he shows, where its growth has been most rapid and extensive, Christianity has been acting as a most powerful counterpoise to selfish isolation. "Each to count as one" is the motto of modern individualism; "One for all, and all for one" is the more comprehensive Christian ideal expression of the relationship between the unit and the aggregate, the individual and society.

To put the matter as plainly as possible. When I say: I shall do what I like, and consult my own interests only, I am an egoist, and step beyond the limits of legitimate individualism. When I say, I owe this to myself, as a member of the

¹ See *Œuvres Complètes*, Vol. III. (On American Democracy) p. 162, 163, 233.

community where the private interests of each are bound up with the common welfare, I am an individualist indeed, but not in any strict sense an egoist. Now, as Christianity is opposed to extreme egoism, so it is opposed to the modern tendency—a revival or survival of paganism—of “depersonalizing man.” In the societies of antiquity, the individual was often sacrificed to the real or supposed welfare of the community, which did not, however, prevent those who had the supreme power, direct or delegated, from giving full reins, as in the Roman empire, to their own egoism in oppressing the rest. In the modern attempts made by some to return to the moral and social ideals prevailing before the promulgation of the gospel, the doctrine of voluntary self-sacrifice for the common good is taught in such a form as practically reduces the individual to a cipher, and, with an exaggeration of altruistic duty calculated to defeat its own object, displaces the right relation between the individual and his environment; whereas Christianity assigns to each its proper sphere.

Christianity
opposed to
depersonal-
izing man.

Exaggerated
ideas of
altruistic
duty.

“What is the highest pinnacle (of perfection) you can reach? It is realized as soon as you have reached the point of complete self-contempt, at that moment when your own happiness becomes the object of complete aversion.”¹

This is the language of extreme Altruism. But in a society where each unit has learned thus to

¹ Friedrich Nietzsche: “*Also Sprach Zarathustra*,” p. 9.

The
absurdity
of extreme
altruism.

The
elevating
character
of true
Christian
unselfish-
ness.

Individual
elevation
must pre-
cede the
elevation of
the
mass.

despise his own happiness it is difficult to imagine why he should be so eager to promote that of others. How can I at the same time regard *my own* happiness as utterly contemptible, and the happiness of others as supremely desirable? Surely if a contempt for personal happiness be regarded as the highest attainment in moral perfection, then to augment the happiness of others, must diminish their holiness in equal proportion. If in the spirit of self-sacrifice, as taught in the Gospel, I live for others, I do not lose my individuality; on the contrary, my unselfishness in that case raises my spiritual individuality; self-renunciation is an act of *the better self*, or rather it is "Christ formed within me," as the higher self. In the same way the elevation and expansion of the individual is necessary to, and indeed must precede the elevation of the mass, for what is the mass but the aggregate of individuals?

"Tis in the advance of the individual mind
That the slow crowd should found their expectation
Eventually to follow,"

says Mr. Browning, and, we may add, crowds are after all individuals taken collectively. Therefore, unless each individual renders *himself* by education and circumstance the most useful organ for the common good, the society, as a whole, to which he belongs must suffer, as the bodily organism suffers if the development of any of its organs be retarded.

When each has attained to his fullest development, and is determined to devote his powers to the highest development of the rest, then the result, or sum total of united efforts, will be the highest amount of efficiency in all. And what is happiness but the sense of full equipment in following the law of our being? In this sense it is true "that regard to the well-being of others is increasing *pari passu* with the taking of means to secure personal well-being," and that "Egoism and Altruism are therefore co-essential."¹

What happiness is.

(c) *The Future Happiness Principle Explained.*

It is, however, against the belief that this well-being will be crowned by perfect blessedness in a future state that the chief assault is directed. This, some modern writers, like Mr. Frederic Harrison, call a selfish creed, on the ground that the wish to perpetuate our own personality beyond the confines of the grave is a glaring instance of religious Egoism. He tries to show how such a desire to extend our own conscious existence beyond this life is morally inferior to the Positivist's hope of "posthumous activity" by means of the good we do or the healthy influence we exercise

The chief point of attack.

The desire for future happiness charged with Egoism.

¹ Herbert Spencer: *The Data of Ethics*, pp. 237-8, "Our conclusion must be that general happiness is to be achieved mainly through the adequate pursuit of their own happiness by individuals; while, reciprocally, the happinesses of individuals are to be achieved in part by their pursuit of the general happiness."—*Ibid.* p. 239.

Mr. Frederic
Harrison's
appeal.

without the self-conscious expectation of eternal reward, but in the consciousness of a "coming incorporation with the glorious future of the race."

"The difference between our faith and that of the orthodox is this, we look to the permanence of the activities which give others happiness; they look to the permanence of the consciousness which can enjoy happiness. Which is the nobler?"¹

The
superiority
of the
Christian's
belief.

If this were the real difference between the two, most certainly Christianity would be the less noble creed. But this is not the case. The Christian has already everything that the Positivist claims, in the assurance of the lasting influence of all that is good and true. His hopes for the race are as high as those of his antagonist—nay, incomparably higher, for they possess the element of immortality; and to the Christian also this is the gratification of benevolence. He is happy, alike in the consciousness of doing a good act, and in leaving a good influence behind him. As George Herbert says or sings in his quaint way,

His present
happiness.

"All other joy grows less
By the one joy of showing kindnesses,"

or as we read concerning our Lord, how He said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts xx. 35). The joy and blessedness in each case is enhanced by the knowledge that all good done lives for ever. Then, *in addition* to a belief in this "subjective immortality," the Christian also entertains a sure and certain hope of everlasting life where happi-

His future
hope.

¹ *Nineteenth Century*, July, 1877, p. 840.

ness consists in holiness, is enhanced by being shared by others, and may, for aught we know, mainly consist in the promotion of each other's happiness. Of such an idea of immortality it cannot be said that it "paralyses practical life, and throws it into discord." St. Paul, in his Epistle to Titus, exhorts Christians

The union of happiness and holiness in the heaven of the Christian.

"to adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things. For the grace of God hath appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us, to the intent that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly and righteously and godly in this present world; looking for the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a people for His own possession, zealous of good works" (Titus ii. 10-14, R.V.).

We ask, whether with such conditions attached to it as to personal and social duties, the hope of a future life thus stated can be called, with any show of justice, "selfishly immoral"? But when Mr. Harrison, in his final reply to the various writers of the Symposium in the *Nineteenth Century* (October, 1877), where this question is fully and ably discussed, speaks of the "idea of a glorified energy in an ampler life" as utterly incompatible with exact thought, and stigmatises the notion of "beatific ecstasy" as an "old and orthodox idea" not satisfying the modern conscience, he enters upon another stage of the controversy, with which we are not here concerned. We may note, however, in passing, that such belief is in com-

The Christian's hope not selfishly immoral.

The
Christian
view in
harmony
with
scientific
teaching.

The
language of
poetry and
oratory to
be dis-
counted.

The
belief in an
endless life
of love not
a self-
centred
vision of
immortality.

plete agreement with the scientific idea of progress and the doctrine of conservation of energy. Eminent scientific men, moreover, have set themselves to prove, on purely rational grounds, the existence of an "unseen universe" as the possible abode of departed spirits. But all we are contending for here is that such ideas and hopes are free from that base egoism with which they are charged. Some selfish alloy, no doubt, may cling to the hope of immortality, especially as expressed by hymn writers and others when they attempt to depict the indescribable bliss which eye hath not seen, in the rapturous language of exalted faith. But the exaggerated language of poetry and oratory must not be judged with logical rigour, such as might be properly applied to religious formularies and compendiums of Christian belief. Even the unguarded expressions of "transcendental celestialism," reprobated as the "eternity of the tabor," scarcely deserve to be characterised as a forecast of future self-indulgence and gross self-satisfaction. The attitude of adoration, above all, carries the spirit beyond itself. Whatever the beatific vision of the Ever Blessed One may be, it must for ever be opposed to egoism, while the belief in an endless life of ceaseless love throughout the ages of eternity, which does not exclude but pre-supposes the exercise of glorified activities in heavenly places, cannot with any show of reason be called a self-centred vision of immor-

tality. Even such a dispassionate critic of a belief in a future life as John Stuart Mill does not object to the wish of perpetuating our personal identity beyond life as either unreasonable or inconsistent with the highest morality; for it implies, as he shows, the hope of a nobler personality surviving material change, and therefore aids the formation of character even in this life. "The hopes of a grander energy in heaven," Mr. Harrison admits in his final reply, "are not open to the charge of vulgar selfishness;" and the concession is sufficient for our purpose.

Mr. J. Stuart Mill's view.

Mr. Frederic Harrison's admission.

III.

THE CLAIMS OF RIVAL SYSTEMS.

HAVING shown that the objections to Christianity as a religious system encouraging egoism are to a great extent founded on a misconception of the terms of the controversy, we may proceed to examine the claims of those rival systems which are suggested as substitutes for Christianity, presumably because of their supposed greater efficacy in securing true altruism. Even Professor Seeley, in his address to the Cambridge Ethical Society, speaks of

Professor Seeley on existing churches.

"the feeling so widely prevalent that existing churches and the existing forms of Christianity are not equal to the burden which the age imposes on them in respect of moral teaching,"

though he adds that

“attacks on Christianity, whatever else they may do, can only have the effect of paralysing ethical life.”

Christianity
has nothing
to fear from
its rivals.

But since these attacks are made, and in view of the danger here alluded to, we are bound to meet them, and to prove that Christianity has nothing on this head to fear from a comparison with its rivals. There may be something very striking at first sight in the towering height of a showy edifice resting on an unsound foundation, compared with a less ambitious attempt at architectural grandeur on a more solid basis. But this is not the case here.

The
superiority
of Christian
ethics.

The ethical superstructure of Christianity will be found in no respect inferior, whilst its basis is in every way superior, to that of the systems offered in its place. It yields to none in its high aims and noble aspirations, or in its demands for self-denial and self-sacrifice for others; and when we go deeper, and examine the grounds on which these systems rest their claims, we shall arrive at the conclusion that in respect to the basis of the data of altruistic ethics, also, it is true that “other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ” (1 Cor. iii. 10).

Pessimist
Altruism.

Take, for instance, the *Altruism taught in Pessimism*, as a religion. Nothing can be more touching than its pity and compassion for human

of His love. Its streams represent the perpetual current of His goodness. The sun shows Him brightening, warming, fertilizing, beautifying all. The silver dawn and the golden sunset foreshadow a life in which the bright hope and joyousness of youth are united with the tranquillity and mature joys of age. And as nature thus becomes full of new beauty and glory, so ordinary life is wonderfully enriched and sweetened. God "blesseth the habitation of the just" (Prov. iii. 33). Daily bread is sweeter when it comes from His hands. All the blessings and enjoyments of domestic and social life become better when they are no longer rivals to God Himself, or regarded as the chief good, but when they are received from Him, in addition to His unspeakable gift, to increase the sum of daily enjoyment. The resources of art and learning, the treasures of literature and science, the amenities of social intercourse, have a new zest and satisfaction when crowned by the blessing of God. The thorny wilderness is changed into a smiling garden; for "wisdom's ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace" (Prov. iii. 17).

Symbolism
of nature.

Let us add a word respecting that exercise of soul—prayer—by which its fellowship with God is chiefly maintained.

The
privilege of
prayer.

To have intercourse with heaven is always elevating; to maintain the habit as a daily exercise, if only it be devoutly carried out, if it be prayer in

The source
of Pessimis-
tic com-
plaints.

over human suffering and cries for relief in universal death, which form the refrain of every Pessimistic poem or essay, are they not the unconscious expressions of self-pity? Whence those savage diatribes and contemptuous jibes directed against human infirmity or injustice? Do they not rise from hearts embittered by a sense of personal injury? They are as inconsistent with true compassion as they are inferior to the tender pitifulness breathing in every word of Christ, and through every line of the New Testament. Which is nobler, to despise the world or to overcome it? The Cross, which is the symbol of suffering, is also the symbol of victory through *self*-conquest. Thus the world and its glory pass away, but only to make room for that new Heaven and new Earth in which dwelleth righteousness. The evil in this present world is acknowledged: "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." Yet says the same Master: "In the world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." In these balanced statements and hopeful accents, breathing the readiness of cheerful devotion in the working out of the world's redemption, founded on a firm belief in the elimination of evil and the final triumph of good over evil, lies the superiority of Christianity on this head as compared with Pessimism.

Victory
through
self-
conquest.

Compare, in the next place, *the Altruism of Posi-*

tivism with that of Christianity as the destined means of regenerating man and society. The religion of humanity regards "the service of man" as its chief aim, basing man's reformation from Egoism to Altruism, not on any positive commands from on high, but on the positive demonstrations of science, —building its system on "facts following facts in rigorous sequence." In the view of Comte, the author of this new system and the originator of the word Altruism, "the Christian religion is essentially the consecration of Egoism, engaging the mind in one tremendous problem how to make peace with the infinite power and secure eternal salvation."¹ Hence "Comte reckoned on the decay of the faith as the hope of social morals." When men have learned, it is said, to give up a futile system of trying to please God, they will serve their fellows, as Mr. Cotter Morrison, one of his most recent followers in this country, puts it:

The basis of the religion of humanity.

Comte's view of the Christian religion.

Mr. Cotter Morrison's misrepresentation of Christianity

"Only to his fellows can man be completely altruistic, 'hoping for nothing again.'"²

There is here a strange misrepresentation of Christianity and misconception of Christian duty.

¹ Compare with this Mr. Lecky's unbiassed testimony in a contrary direction, "If Christianity was remarkable for its appeals to the selfish and interested side of our nature, *it was far more remarkable for the empire it attained over disinterested Enthusiasm.* And, referring to Christ's law of love, he adds: "It creates a boundless, uncalculating self-abnegation that transforms the character and is the parent of every virtue." *Hist. of Europ. Morality*, Vol. II., pp. 8, 9.

² *The Service of Man*, p. 261.

The religion of humanity adaptation of Christianity without the supernatural.

Comte's teaching about promoting the happiness of others derived from Christianity.

Christ is emphatically called the Son of man, as being the true representative of humanity, and "he that is greatest among you," He says to His disciples, "let him be your *servant*," as on the other hand it is said of Him, that by "His knowledge shall My righteous *servant* justify many." Such words lay the foundation of "a religion of humanity," and, in fact, the system which claims superiority over Christianity is but an adaptation of it, discarding only its supernatural ingredients whilst appropriating its best ethical ideas. In the Christian scheme, too, as has been well pointed out, the material creation culminates in humanity, but humanity culminates in Christ. And what is the "enthusiasm of humanity," in the true sense, but the love of Christ constraining us? To live for others that we may live in others is a noble thought, but Comtism derives it from Christianity. To live for humanity, to use Comte's language, "makes the principal satisfaction of each to consist in the fact of helping to bring about the happiness of others." The Gospel declares the same truth, only in a better way, and Comte's *dictum* is but a re-statement of the Christian duty of brotherly love. The exaggerated attempts made by Altruism to destroy Egoism (in the sense of individualism) would lead to self-annihilation, on the principle, *Vivat humanitas, pereant homines* (Long live humanity, though men

as individuals perish), which amounts to a contradiction. Moreover, the process of transforming the egoist into an altruist, according to the latest exponent of this system, is to be brought about according to "the laws of the material universe" by a course of scientific breeding:

Altruists by
scientific
breeding.

"If the interest of society requires a due proportion of altruistic sentiments in each of its members, we can only expect them in those individuals who are correspondingly organized. While all the emotions can be cultivated, none can be implanted or directly infused. In this, as in other cases, we can only cultivate the good sorts, the good stock, and eliminate and discourage, as far as possible, the bad."¹

And what are the chances of raising the maximum of congenital altruism on such physical principles? Can this be called superior to the method of Christianity, which seeks to reclaim the sinner, to recover the outcast, to restore the fallen, to renew the repenting? This is a form of altruism infinitely higher than that of scientific selection for the improvement of the race. "Ye that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak,"² is an appeal to altruistic sentiment more tender, and more likely to prove efficacious, than the heartless appeal to physical force:—Be strong or be removed out of the way, in order to the further progress and full development of altruistic virtue.

The
Christian
method.

Another enemy of Christian Eudaimonism is

¹ *The Service of Man*, an Essay towards the Religion of the Future. By James Cotter Morrison, p. 297.

² Romans xv. 1.

Mr. Leslie
Stephen is
typical man.

modern *Agnosticism*, which scouts the very idea of a direct Divine message to mankind as a superannuated superstition, though Agnostics "still cling to duty, and feel their last enthusiasm in resignation to universal law;" whilst the moral fervour displayed by them often might serve as a pattern to Christians. While Mr. Leslie Stephen says that "the truly virtuous man is the typical man whose character conforms to the conditions of social vitality,"¹ and that the typical man thus described is the *happiest*, he finds it necessary to add in another place that "all that can be done is to minimize the misery which cannot be annulled,"² by way of promoting happiness. We may admire the courage and consistency which enables him and others like him to preach and to practice altruistic duty under such unfavourable conditions and with such a poor modicum of comfort to support him, but we can scarcely congratulate him on the result of a system which denies the faith, and builds instead on "the scientific basis for the art of conduct."

Mr. L.
Stephen
accepts
the altruistic
theory.

"For my part," he says, "I accept the altruistic theory, and I accept what I hold to be its legitimate and inseparable conclusion—namely, that the path of duty does not coincide with the path of happiness."³

Much credit is due to the moral courage of any one who can hold such a melancholy theory without being deterred or even discouraged from living up

¹ *Science of Ethics*, p. 385.

² *Ibid.*, p. 354.

³ *loc. cit.*, p. 431.

to it. We may thankfully recognize in this form of Stoicism an indirect proof of the moral claims of conscience; of conscience, in this case, be it remembered, charged with the secretions of a creed instilled by early Christian training, but since abandoned. And we may see in this desperate effort to hold strictly to the sacredness of moral obligation, the natural craving of the soul to fill up the vacuum left by departed faiths, and to find in ethical philosophy the only available substitute for spiritual religion. To make altruism, however, itself a religion is a very different thing from following altruism from religious motives. The question is not between altruism and selfishness, but between altruism without religious sanction, and altruism consciously founded on Christianity. True, the happiness is made subordinate to holiness, as we know from the sayings of the Founder, and the experience of His disciples, who find the path of duty rugged enough at times. Nevertheless Christians do feel happiness, as we have already said, in the consciousness of doing well, and contributing in an unselfish spirit to the happiness of others. It is no inferiority, but the glory of Christianity, that it reveals the path of duty as coinciding with the path of happiness.

The moral claims of conscience indirectly proved by Neo-Stoicism.

Non-religious and Christian Altruism.

Happiness and duty.

Some altruist agnostics take a more cheerful view than that of Mr. Leslie Stephen, of the

Mr. Herbert Spencer's view of self-sacrifice and self-preservation.

"Ethics of Renunciation." Thus Mr. Herbert Spencer, who regards both self-sacrifice and self-preservation as primordial instincts, and considers Egoism and Altruism as co-essential,¹ speaks of the simultaneous evolution of Altruism and Egoism—

"The state of mind accompanying altruistic action being a pleasurable state, is to be counted in the sum of pleasures which the individual can receive; and in this sense cannot be other than egoistic."²

Thus far he approaches the standpoint of Christian Eudaimonism. But as the representative of "Utilitarian Altruism," which he justly calls "a duly qualified Egoism," he falls below the Christian standard, for Christians do not do good for the joy it brings. Although it comes to them unsought and unlooked for, incidentally as it were, it is not pursued as their chief end. They find in acts of philanthropy and disinterested benevolence themselves their own great reward. Those disciples who inquired, "What shall we have therefore?" like the labourer in the parable, who murmured when the householder gave to every man a penny irrespective of the number of hours he had served, were reproved for so doing.

Happiness not the Christian's chief end.

Agnostic altruists.

Some agnostics, indeed, come very near to Christianity. They make noble efforts to be cheerful in the performance of altruistic duty. They

¹ *Data of Ethics*, pp. 226-30, 237.

² *loc. cit.*, p. 214.

struggle against vice and evil, hoping against hope, in order to augment the happiness of some, and sadly, but energetically, continue the strife against the sottish coarseness or more refined intellectual selfishness of modern materialism, saying to themselves: "Stronger than woe is will," yet doubting all the while whether life be worth living, as far as they personally are concerned. For example, who can help admiring the pathos, the gentle pity, and earnest struggle of soul, caught in the meshes of physical ethics, yet following a higher spiritual ideal, expressed in the following well-known and often quoted lines—

Aspirations
of Agnostic
Altruism.

"May I reach
That purest heaven, and be to other souls
The cup of strength in some great agony,
Enkindle generous ardour, feed pure love,
Beget the smiles that have no cruelty ;
Be the sweet presence of a good diffused,
And in diffusion ever more intense ;
So shall I join that choir invisible,
Whose music is the gladness of the world."

But, we may ask, does not this savour of Eudaimonism, without the enjoyment experienced by the Christian in following the law of love, which is to him the law of liberty? The sadness of Neo-Stoicism, like that of the ancient Stoics, is the result of lost belief, and the attempts made by sceptics to create artificially a joyousness which they did not feel, in the sixteenth and in the eighteenth centuries, and renewed by their followers in the present day,

The
sadness
of Neo-
Stoicism.

The effects
of loss of
faith.

go far to prove, that, as it is in the nature of Christianity to produce gladness in the performance of duty, so it is in the nature of unbelief to produce sadness. Loss of faith produces languor and lassitude, which ultimately lead to moral failure.

“When the supernatural does not come in,” says the author of *Natural Religion*, “to overwhelm the natural, and turn life upside down, when it is admitted that religion deals in the first instance with the known and the natural, then we may well begin to doubt whether the known and natural can suffice for human life. No sooner do we try to think so than pessimism raises its head. The more our thoughts widen and deepen, as the universe grows upon us, and we become accustomed to boundless space and time, the more petrifying is the contrast of our own insignificance, the more contemptible become the pettiness, shortness, fragility of the individual life. *A moral paralysis creeps upon us. For a while we comfort ourselves with the notion of self-sacrifice; we say, ‘What matter if I pass, let me think of others!’ But the other has become contemptible no less than the self;* all human griefs alike seem little worth assuaging, human happiness too paltry at the best to be worth increasing. The whole moral world is reduced to a point, the spiritual city, ‘the goal of all the saints’ dwindles to the ‘least of little stars;’ good and evil, right and wrong, become infinitesimal, ephemeral matters, while eternity and infinity remain attributes of that only which is outside the realm of morality. Life becomes more intolerable the more we know and discover, so long as everything widens and deepens except our own duration, and that remains as pitiful as ever. The affections die away in a world where everything great and enduring is cold, they die of their own conscious feebleness and bootlessness.”¹

The only
remedy.

What remedy is there for this but to raise up the broken altar of the “unknown God?” Belief in the impersonal laws of nature and the immanent

¹ *Natural Religion*, by the author of *Ecce Homo*, pp. 261-2.

laws of social life have not the power of an operative faith in a Divine legislator and living Saviour, the type of perfect humanity, raising it to Himself.

Belief in impersonal and immanent law imperative.

This brings us to the next stage of our inquiry, to show how in Christ and His law we have an example and exemplification of the highest form of altruism to be followed by his disciples.

IV.

CHRIST AND HIS LAW.

IN the divine person of Christ, His life and labours, His death and passion, we have the noblest exhibition of active and passive altruism; while in His triumphant resurrection and ascension, and the subsequent conquests of the cross, we have an earnest of the final victory of good over evil. Such an outlook steels the courage and sustains the struggles of His faithful followers. The sublime egoism of the Stoic, falling back for support on the dignity of human nature (like the modern "self-respect" of Kant) was "bracing, but not consolatory," and failed in appealing to the masses of mankind, because it regarded them with philosophical contempt. "The ignorant cannot be moral," says Karl Pearson. "This people which knoweth not the law are accursed," said the Pharisees of old. For this reason Stoicism "fell

The example of Christ.

The earnest of final victory.

Stoical egoism not consolatory.

Stoicism
and
Christian
charity.

The
Gospel
an epic
of human
action.

Sympathy
the source
of altruism.

considerably short of the standard of Christian charity," as Professor Sidgwick admits in his history of Ethics. It served the purpose of a melancholy protest against the selfish greed and unhallowed earthliness of the times which it failed to cure.¹ The gospel, *Euangelion*, came as the good news for all, speaking of good will, *eulokia*, towards man, and stirring them up to do good works, *euergazein*, and for this reason the Bible has been called an "epic of human action," inspiring man with a thirst for noble action, and a noble capacity for high suffering; whilst in its tender sympathy with human sorrow, and its sad compassionateness for human infirmity, it does not yield the palm to any other system of morality or religion. Sympathy, according to the latest exponents of Modern Ethics, is the primal source of altruism, and Adam Smith, the author of the *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, as well as the chief exponent of Modern Egoism, says as much. "The natural and fundamental fact," in Ethics, "the direct and normal case, is that in which sympathy leads to genuine altruism."² It takes its rise in the family, and here,

¹ "Reverence and humility, a constant sense of the supreme majesty of God and the weakness and sinfulness of man, and a perpetual reference to another world were the essential characteristics of Christianity, the source of all its power, the basis of its distinctive type. Of all these the teaching of Seneca is the direct antithesis." Lecky's *History of European Morals*, Vol. I. p. 341, 3rd Edition.

² *Science of Ethics*, pp., 237, 239; *ib.* p. 134.

as Mr. Leslie Stephen admits, "it is most vitally connected with the happiness of the individual," from which we are entitled to infer that Altruism does not exclude Eudaimonism, and that the common charge against Christian family life, as narrowing the sympathies, is after all untenable, especially if it be remembered that Christian sympathy extends far beyond the family circle to "every family in heaven and earth" (Eph. iii. 16, R.V.) No system of Ethics can be more comprehensive.

Connection
of sympathy
with
individual
happiness.

But, say some, Christianity as a system is a very different thing from what its representatives have made it since. Let us see how far this charge is verified by facts. The self-seeking of modern Christians is invariably attributed to the individualist influences of the Reformation principles. Yet what do we read concerning Calvin, as one of its most unamiable representatives, in the view of such adversaries? His annual income amounted to one hundred and fifty francs, twelve bushels of corn, and two barrels of wine. When at the time of the famine the Town Council offered him some addition to this, he refused it, "I do not wish to make gain of you," he said, "but that you may be gainers through me." Again, to take one or two examples of Christian asceticism, as a type of what is called "sickly saintliness." It is not true that such withdrawals from the world are due to purely selfish motives and to exaggerated

The
alleged self
seeking of
modern
Christians

Calvin's un
selfishness.

Christian
asceticism.

Madame
Guion.

Self-sacrifice
for others.

views of the miseries of life on the part of persons who make no attempt to remove them, but pursue the selfish quest after mystical union with God, moved, moreover, by feelings of self-interest. Take such an expression as that of Madame Guion—"Everything is matter of indifference to me; I *cannot* want any thing more; there are times when I do not even know whether I do exist or not." In this merging self in God, self is lost in a grand self-forgetfulness. There are and have been hundreds of instances of this kind to show that it cannot be said of such pious ecstasies, however faulty in other respects, that selfishness is only banished to the unconscious motives, but not abolished. We have no desire to defend modern recrudescences of Mediævalism which rest on mistaken notions of self-mortification, but they must not be too hastily confounded with spiritual self-seeking of the baser sort. Such examples of detachment of soul as we find in many instances, ancient and modern, showing that unreserved devotion to Him who went about doing good, and who cleansed the lepers, so far from becoming unproductive in the selfish isolation of mystic transcendentalism, become the spring of human sympathy and self-sacrificing devotion to others. And if we take the social view of Christianity which regards the world as the subject of redemption, and Christ as the Saviour of society, as well as of the individual

soul, may we not regard St. Augustine's work, *De Civitate Dei*—as has been well pointed out—both as a solemn funeral oration over the ancient world, and as a memorial exhibiting and glorifying the new world after its re-organization by the power of Christianity? And has not the ideal of society as transformed by Christianity held its place in every age of the Church, and appealed to corresponding social instincts and duties, as by no means inconsistent with that other idea of the world as alienated from God, and doomed to destruction? For it holds that out of its débris is to arise the "Universal Society, inspired by Christian love, that by means of Christian education and the principles of self-discipline and self-denial taught in the Christian family, and a thousand channels, ministerial and otherwise, appealing to *self-renouncing* love, the process of the world's redemption, *i.e.*, the salvation of society in the best sense of the word, may be brought about by the Spirit of Christ working in the hearts of His disciples."

Augustine's
*De Civitate
Dei.*

The
power of
the ideal of
society as
transformed
by Chris-
tianity.

No doubt self-reform precedes social reform, and self-improvement lies at the foundation of every attempt at the improvement of society according to the ruling principles of Christianity.

Self-reform
and social
reform.

"Within yourselves deliverance must be wrought,"

is the preacher's burden, since the formation of

Professor
Pearson's
view of
morality.

character precedes the reformation of society. But this fact, although it has at times led to the erroneous conception that Christianity attaches too much importance to individual, and too little to social development, is recognized by un-Christian and even anti-Christian writers on the subject; thus Prof. Karl Pearson says:

“Morality is not the blind following of a social impulse, but a habit of action based upon character—character moulded by that knowledge of truth which must become an integral part of our being.”¹

A higher Eudaimonism, with less of self in it than this, can scarcely be conceived. It may be a very exalted form of altruism to merge the unit in the race so that individuality is lost, but it is impossible to do so practically, it is an impossible thought to rational beings such as we are.

“Individuality² is for the reasoning man as indispensable a condition of his life, as the circulation of the blood is a condition of his animal individuality.”

The cure
for Utili-
tarian Indi-
vidualism.

Christian love, leading to absorption of self in the general welfare, is the best cure for Utilitarian Individualism, being at once its corrective and its complement. Thus, on comparing the power of Christianity—with its sympathizing High Priest imparting His Spirit to His followers—to transform the selfishness of human nature into self-sacrificing sympathy, as exemplified in the whole

¹ *Ethics of Free Thought*, p. 119.

² Count Tolstoi—*Life*, p. 155.

course of Christian thought and life, with that of the hierophants of free thought, the pontiffs of Positivism, and the pundits of a chilling Agnosticism, we find that the superiority is on the side of Christianity.

“If I am incapable of sympathy, no proof of the advantages of good actions to others will induce me to sacrifice myself,”

is the bold acknowledgment of the latest exponent of that system of Ethics which resolves all morality into an adaptation to social conditions, in order to effect the highest amount of social good. The impotence of such a moral system, its avowed inability to evolve naturally the highest forms of altruism, could not be stated in plainer terms. They amount to an acknowledgment of utter inadequacy to do what only supernatural power can effect in regenerating the heart, and thus supplanting the spirit of self-seeking by that of unselfish regard for the general good, while reinforcing the weakness of resolve in human beings, who struggle under adverse conditions to subordinate material to spiritual interests, and turning egoistic desires into noble efforts for the welfare of others.

The
impotence
of the
Ethics of
Naturalism.

Super-
natural
power
needed to
supplant
self-seeking

We may, therefore, now leave the ground of Christian apologetics, and take up a more aggressive attitude towards those systems which are suggested as substitutes for Christianity, in order to show

Christianity
alone can
solve the
enigmas
of life and
mind.

their inferiority to the Christian system, as a philosophy of the universe in its relation to human life, then as a system of altruistic ethics, and lastly as a scheme of eschatology. It will appear on every ground that Christianity alone can solve the great enigmas of life and of mind which concern man's place in the universe, his duty here, and his final destiny hereafter.

V.

PROPOSED SUBSTITUTES FOR CHRISTIANITY UNSATISFACTORY.

(a) *As Philosophies of the Universe.*

The
alleged
want of
the age.

WHAT is wanted now-a-days, we are told, is a new religion, which shall appeal to the sense of duty as forcibly, and preach righteousness and truth, justice and mercy, as solemnly as Christianity does, "only so as not to shock modern views of the universe."¹ We should say, on the contrary, that none of the substitutes proposed for Christianity thus far gives an explanation as satisfactory, or as able to still the spiritual cravings of our human nature. The sad misgivings of souls wandering about without the key to the mystery of being which faith supplies, the insufficiency of social religion to fill up the gap, may be seen in Mill's *Essays on Religion*. A view of the universe which does not inspire confidence in the

Insufficiency
of social
religion.

¹ *Natural Religion*, p. 157.

“world-process,” as a motor to a nobly-spent life, must in the majority of cases produce a melancholy which cripples effort. On the other hand, a firm belief in God, ordering the course of this world, which in its happy assurance can say :

The effect of firm belief in God.

“ Yet I doubt not through the ages one increasing purpose runs,” has an invigorating effect on those, who, as co-workers with God, do their assigned task “with gladness and singleness of heart.” They are thus enabled to help in rendering the world a happy habitation for human beings, therein following the divine plan as far as it can be traced in nature, and receiving further light from divine revelation.

There are four views of the universe in its relation to man, according to Kant. We may regard the universe (1) as an hostelry ; (2) a house of correction ; (3) a madhouse ; or (4) a house for the reception of refuse. The two former alone can come under consideration here. The latter, being anti-cosmical and misanthropical in their tendencies, are excluded from the present discussion, especially as modern thought is less inclined to that cynical contempt which delights to dwell with sardonic bitterness on men’s sins and inconsistencies, and with equally merciless severity to castigate their foibles and graver faults—than to an oversensitive sympathy which finds excuses for them on the score of the unfavourable conditions of their environment.

Kant's four views of the universe in relation to man.

The world viewed as an hostelry.

That the world is an hostelry where man abides but for a season, or a house of correction where he is subjected to discipline, are ideas consonant with the teaching of Christianity. But in this aspect they assume a reality and a significance which neither the egoism of Epicureanism nor the isolated self-esteem of Stoicism, in their ancient or modern forms could give them.

"It has never been established by observation," says M. Renan, in his recent volume on the history of Israel, "that a superior being troubles himself, for a moral or an immoral purpose, with the things of nature, or the affairs of mankind."

A world without a purpose.

But if so, what reason is there for believing that the altruistic efforts of the best of men should succeed in a world without a purpose? Hearts would cease to throb with sympathy, and hands would grow feeble in exerting themselves for others, paralyzed by the thought of a headless universe, in which no hand invisible shapes the destiny of men and nations.

The effect of recognising God as the chief good.

But when God is recognised as the chief good and the source of all beneficence, when the heart is drawn towards Him with disinterested love, it will find delight in doing good to His creatures. This agrees with the Aristotelian view of happiness as "energy directed towards the highest good."

The view of Modern Hedonism.

Modern Hedonism,¹ on the contrary, says that "Nature has placed mankind under the governance of two sovereign masters, pleasure and pain."

¹ The doctrine that pleasure is the standard and criterion of moral good, and of right action.

It regards the world as an *hostelry*, where the sound of mirth and merriment, and the agonizing ejaculations of grief and pain, are heard strangely mingling with each other, until the sound of the tolling funeral-bell puts an end to both in the silence of the grave. And yet those who live in this *hostelry* are exhorted to untiring efforts for the promotion of the greatest happiness of the greatest number, concerning whose final fate nothing is known for certain. The conditions are very adverse to such efforts. According to the counter theory, Christians serving under a Divine master, who is "the only Potentate," as "strangers and pilgrims," may find their sojourn in the *hostelry* pleasant or painful; but they are supported by the consoling thought that they are travelling to a better country, and so can lend a helping hand to others journeying in the same direction. "Happy are the sons of God," for they can say: "We know that if the earthly house of our tabernacle be dissolved, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens" (2 Cor. v. 1).

The support
and con-
solation of
Christians.

The consideration of the world as a house of correction is also in accord with Christian ideas. And this view of the world, as a training institution for a future state of existence, is vastly superior again to Stoicism, which in its cold severity, aiming as it did at correct conduct in accordance with "the eternal

The world,
as a house
of cor-
rection.

The
influence of
Stoicism.

law of the universe," encouraged, indeed, self-discipline and self-control, but also that kind of self-reverence and self-regard which ends in self-idolatry and self-sufficiency, and which ill accords with self-correction. In its lofty pity for mortals of lower moral stature, moreover, it was lacking entirely in that spirit of compassionate devotion to save that which was lost, which is the distinctive feature of Christianity; and the same is true of Positivism. Here, again, belief in the uniformity of law without a lawgiver, accompanied by the endeavour strictly to follow the law of Nature, and the fulfilment of duty with "pathetic disinterestedness" as due to the higher self, must needs fail as principles of conduct on the application of crucial tests when human nature is unsupported in its weak endeavour by faith in God as the moral governor of the Universe.

Its defect.

The externalisation of
the soul.

There is another view of the Universe in which ancient and modern Epicureanism and Stoicism seem to meet, and where their leading ideas are reconciled and harmonized, viz., "the Externalization of Soul," that is, the attributing to the scheme of things, in default of a God, some of the highest spiritual attributes. The idea moves the human heart by reason of its mystery to feelings of reverential awe, and brings it into sympathetic *rapprochement* with the occult forces of the Universe thus

spiritualized. It evokes the feeling of "cosmic emotion" in the scientific man, and in others a kind of æsthetic love mingled with terror, somewhat akin to the feeling produced in poetic minds by the beautiful and sublime in Nature, a sentiment of undefined solemnity, almost amounting to Nature-worship, but rigidly excluding adoration addressed to a supreme Being, and capable of raising the mind to a higher sense of a spirituality in Nature, though strictly disassociated from the spiritual-mindedness of religion. Reverence there is here of some kind, but only a reverence for unknown forces, for aught we know, fatalistic in their consequences, though a dim hope is not excluded that the plan of the universal process is "out of the darkness into the sun." Compare with this the reverential regard for the Most High, linked to a belief in Him by whom He has reconciled the world unto Himself, admit the Christian ideas of moral ruin and moral recovery in the world, and the superiority of Christian Eudaimonism over this form of Geocentric Optimism—the optimism which has its centre in the earth—becomes at once apparent.

The reverence it produces.

Comparison with fear of God and faith in Christ.

The same is true of Christian Eudaimonism in relation to Geocentric Pessimism, the "negative pole of Eudaimonism," which makes the world-process culminate in destruction. From this point of view Von Hartmann explains the process of natural selection, which plays such an important part in speculations of this kind in the present day. Think, he says, of

Natural selection according to Hartmann.

“all the endless misery in cottage and palace, the fighting and fuming of nations at variance with each other, and which only subserves the purposes of that cruel and unrelenting struggle of existence in which the strife and wrestling of individuals after a higher culture is finally summed up. As in nature millions of germs are only as so much material used up indifferently to serve the purpose of selection in the struggle for existence, so in the providence of history millions of human beings are only used like so many hot-beds of manure to force culture. The circumstances which regulate population exhibit the utmost cruelty. Hunger, pest, and wars; merciless, like the hoof of the heifer bruising the flower on the meadow, the buskin of history destroys the finest blossoms of humanity in strutting unfeelingly across the despair of crushed hopes, the agonies of tortured consciences, the grinding rage of enslaved patriotism—in order to fit these pigmies of human beings for its own purpose, in a thousand ways it feeds them in illusions.”

Christianity
eliminates
evil.

Christian
Pessimism.

And what is this purpose? To teach men, by disillusionizing them in the end, to look for true happiness in extinction and non-existence. Christianity, on the contrary, solves the problem of existence by eliminating the evil which excludes perfect felicity. Hence the cheerfulness of tone in early Christian writings, even in the Latin hymns before those later mediæval times in which the shadows deepen and corruption spreads in the Church and in the world. Then Christian Pessimism seeks expression in the moaning misereres and saintly sighs of flagellants and mystics, passing their lives in sad regrets over departed purity and primitive love. A cheerful tone returns during the Reformation period, as *e.g.* in Protestant hymnology, taking its key note from Luther's lyre. With the recovered sense of freedom and the

restoration of the purity of the faith, new hopes of returning harmony and happiness, and yearning for millennial blessedness, find expression in the literature of that time. In the same way may be explained the fresh outburst of joyous activity in the Elizabethan age, and a similar return to cheerful energy coinciding with the Evangelical Revival at the close of the last century. In both cases it was a spiritual liberation of mind which opened the avenues to material as well as to moral progress.

Restored
faith and
new hopes.

(b) As Systems of Ethics.

This suggests, in the next place, what has been called the "Eudaimony of Virtue," the meaning of which, briefly stated, is that virtue is its own reward, that fidelity to duty is linked with inward felicity. But, say the Ethical rigorists of the modern era: "it is only on the ruins of every kind of individual Eudaimonism that genuine morality can be raised up." Now, Christian Eudaimonism as applied to morals attaches happiness, no doubt, to the fulfilment of moral obligation, but only in the sense in which we speak of some one or another distinguished by disinterested beneficence, as *never happy* except when he is doing some good act.

Duty and
felicity

But in this, Christianity proves its superiority over those systems of natural ethics which base all

Utilitarian
principles of
action
insufficient.

virtue on self-love, or those even which reduce it to benevolence. For nowhere is "the glory of Divine disinterestedness" more distinctly and authoritatively taught than in the pages of the New Testament. As the writer of the Present Day Tract¹ on *Utilitarianism* has already shown, treating the subject from a different, but not opposite point of view, neither the principle of the greatest happiness of the greatest number, "universal calm beneficence," nor that which makes individual pleasure the motor of virtuous conduct, "calm, deliberate self-love," are sufficient as ruling principles of action. What we have to prove in the present Tract is the converse of this truth, that Christianity alone can safely admit that there is such a thing as "the serene joy of virtue," and that happiness accompanies right conduct, because it rests on the belief that the Divine laws of conduct derive their full authority from Him who has been pleased to attach "delight after the inward man" to a strict following of "the law of the spirit of life." Here "self-love" is not "the autocrat of human life." On the other hand, as Dr. Martineau says of the superior ethical efficacy of the Divine rule of conduct—

Why
happiness
accom-
panies right
conduct.

"Notwithstanding all that philosophers have said about the agreement of virtue with rational self-interest, it may be

¹ *Utilitarianism: an Illogical and Irreligious System of Morals.* By the Rev. J. Radford Thomson, M.A. *Present Day Series*, No. 40.

doubted whether their reasonings ever recalled by a single step any wandering will, while it is notorious that the rugged earnestness of many a preacher, assuming a consciousness of sin, and speaking to nothing else, has awakened multitudes to a new life, and carried them out of their former nature."¹

No doubt there have been Christians, even Christian divines, who have gone too far in the importance they attach to prudential motives to virtue.² Nor is it difficult to see why some of the best reason amiss after this fashion: "He who is virtuous is wise; and he who is wise is good; and he who is good is happy."³ True Christianity, however, far from "trying to cast out the devil of selfishness by a direct appeal to the personal self," appeals to a higher authority and a purer motive, *i.e.*, the will of God and the imitation of Christ's self-sacrificing beneficence. Moral health and happiness may often co-exist side by side. "The voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the tabernacles of the righteous." But misery and dire misfortune may accompany a life of unexampled holiness. "Many are the afflictions of the righteous," though in the end "the Lord delivereth him out of them all."

Christian
Utilitarians.

Christianity
appeals to
the will of
God and
the imita-
tion of
Christ.

The moral maxims of Christianity, it may be said, do not *per se* promise to procure a maximum of happiness as a *quid pro quo*, as a reward for the highest attainment in holiness, nor, on the other

Moral
maxims of
Christianity.

¹ *Types of Ethical Theory*, Vol. II. p. 77.

² See Paley's *Moral Philosophy* for an example.

³ King Alfred's *Boethius*.

Christian
teaching
relating to
happiness.

hand, do they teach entire indifference to personal felicity, still less do they make the latter their chief object, for that is absolute perfection (Matt. v. 48). Christianity does not measure with the nicety of a hedonistic calculus the exact relation of happiness to virtue, but it teaches that happiness, as a subjective feeling of moral satisfaction in following what is right and doing what is good, may be felt on the part of those who follow the divine impulse which prompts them to live the higher life. And concerning all such acts as have the welfare of others for their sole aim, what Shakespeare ascribes to the quality of mercy may be said :

“ It blesseth him that gives, and him who takes.”

The
standpoint
of the
Hedonists.

Mr. T. H. Green, in distinguishing his own ideal from the standpoint of the hedonists, remarks, “ In them the good is generically the pleasant ; in this treatise the common characteristic of the good is that it satisfies some desire.” It may be objected to this theory, that unsatisfied desire is pain ; therefore its opposite is pleasure, and our wishing to be satisfied is tantamount to a desire to be spared the pain of dissatisfaction. The objection vanishes if the desire satisfied is the demand of conscience bringing our will into conformity with the will of God (2 Sam. xxiii. 5). It is this which has produced such noble examples of self-surrender and readiness for self-immolation as that of St. Paul and the Christian saints and martyrs of the first

The
desire for
conformity
to the will
of God.

century. For the noblest exhibition of disinterested love and self-renouncing enthusiasm we must look to a higher law than self-love merging into self-identification with the well-being of others.

The source of disinterested love.

“Who was ever known to make himself a philanthropist in order to add to his enjoyment? or a martyr to truth in order to taste the pleasures of heroism? You cannot give yourself freely away while you are casting side glances at what you mean to reserve for your private advantage. . . . Hedonistic advance to any higher love is not less impossible than horizontal movement uphill.”¹

Those who now-a-days make the “economy of social welfare the only test of rightness,” and describe the moral law as the “approximate expression of the conditions of social vitality,” forget that “conformity to the conditions of social welfare” presupposes a training of mind and heart, an education of the conscience, which unaided human nature can never attain to without the aid of religion. In order to yet further development of the “public spirit of the race,” we must look to the higher ethics of Christianity and its power of renovating and reinforcing human nature in its feebler moments, of imparting a divine vitality and motive force to human action, in short what Kant speaks of as a moral regeneration. And as it is by the operation of a supernatural spiritual agency that the individual man attains to a comparative complete-

The public spirit of the race.

Completeness of individual character

¹ Dr. Martineau, *Types of Ethical Theory*, II. pp. 341, 342.

Adaptation
to the
exigencies
of social
life.

ness of character, the humility inspired by it enables him to say, "By the grace of God I am what I am." So, too, it is by means of a superinduced principle of spiritual unity that individuals adapt themselves to the exigencies of social life: "We have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren," and thus the organisation of Christian charity becomes the "machinery of social service."

(c) As regards the Final Fate of Man.

The
failure of
Hedonist
philosophy.

But Christianity as a philosophy of life looks beyond the present. The scientific hedonist, whose mind is centred on terrestrial existence, says: "Every pleasure raises the tide of life; every pain lowers the tide of life." His philosophy fails at the moment when life begins to ebb away, with no returning tide to succeed it. Death comes to all as individuals in due course of time, and finally the extinction of the human race on the globe at a distant though not incalculable period. And since pleasure and pain are not meted out in exact proportion to virtue and vice, it is unscientific and unphilosophical, in view of the balance of forces, to exclude that form of vitality which Christians call everlasting life. "If death ends the man, and cosmic convulsions finish off all the constellations, then we arrive at the insane conception of an universe possibly emptied of every form of being,

which is the most unthinkable and incredible of all conclusions.”¹ On the supposition of the existence of intelligence and order in the universe—and it is impossible to reason about universal laws without such a supposition—a belief in the restitution of all things, a season of retribution and readjustment follows as a logical necessity. Man cannot divest himself of an indefinable craving for it. It is a feeling at least as strong as the instinct to live, concerning which the hedonist tells us, “unless pleasure were life-preserving there would be no evolution;” and, again, “Because there is evolution, pleasure is life-preserving.” But we may inquire where is this “blindfold evolution” to end? The mechanical and materialistic view of the evolutionary process, as a “continuous action of physical and natural principles only,” is not only eudaimonistic but even optimistic in its tendencies. But this seems unreasonable on the part of those who are resolutely determined not to look beyond this life. It admits teleology, or a rational plan in the universe, and yet, whilst acknowledging inequality and injustice in the nature of things, it nevertheless refuses to look forward to the Telos, or end of all existence, when they shall find at last their explanation. Christianity does this. Christian eschatology steps over the arbitrary and

A
belief in
retribution
necessary.

Materialistic
evolution
eudai-
monistic.

Teleology
admitted,
but the
Telos not
anticipated.

¹ *Death and Afterwards*, by Sir Edwin Arnold, K.C.I.E., C.S.I., p. 33, 2nd Ed.

Christian
eschatology.

unscientific boundary and is more philosophical than evolutionary optimism, inasmuch as it permits no break in the continuity of existence, and affirms the indestructibility of mind, because in assuming uniformity of plan in the universe it cannot admit the thought that all human progress, material, mental, and moral, culminates in the blind alley of nonentity, nescience, and ethical nihilism. In proof of this superiority of Christianity as a philosophy of the life of the future, we may cite a remarkable passage from Sir Edwin Arnold's recently published essay on *Death and Afterwards*, which, coming as it does from the pen of one saturated with Oriental mysticism and theosophy, appeals with greater force to minds prejudiced against prevailing faiths. He divides mortals into three classes :—

Christianity
as a
philosophy
of life.

Sir Edwin
Arnold's
division
of men.

“Of these,” he says, “the happiest and most useful in their generation are the healthy-minded ones, who are too full of vigour or too much busied with pleasure or duty to trouble themselves about death and its effects. The most enviable are such as find, or affect to find, in the authority or the arguments of any extant religion sufficing demonstration of a future existence. And perhaps the most foolish are those, who, following ardent researches of science, learn so little at the knees of their ‘star-eyed’ mistress as to believe those forces which are called intellect, emotion, and will, capable of extinction, while they discover and declare the endless conservatism of motion and matter” (p. 10).

And, speaking of the yearnings of souls innumerable dissatisfied with present existence and

questioning the reality of a future life, he adds :

“What a change, if all these could really believe that they were cherished guests in an intermediate mansion of a benign universe, not doomed captives in one of its mournful dungeons ! How happy, as well as fair and attractive, this planet would become if it were not a doctrine, not a theory, not a poetic dream, but a fact seen and accepted, that Death arrives as the gentlest angel of all the many ministers of man, bringing him far more than birth ever brought ; and leading him by a path as full of miracles of soft arrangement, and as delicately contrived for his benefit as is the process of birth itself, to heights of advanced existence, simple nevertheless, in their turn and order as are the first drops of the breast-milk of his mother, and neither more nor less wonderful.” (pp. 11, 12).

Christians are in this enviable position, they have this happy assurance, as followers of Him who is the life of the world, and who says : “Because I live, ye shall live also.” Not only does this establish an irreversible claim on the part of Christianity as a Eudaimonistic system of transcendental philosophy, but it arms Christians with the most powerful stimulus to present effort and sustained energy in every good work under the sun. Transcendental faith only, whether in regard to material or moral well-being, entitles its professors to say with St. Peter on the mount of the Transfiguration, “It is good to be *here*,” because the eye travels thence to the mount of the Ascension with its promise of a better *hereafter*. Even the Pessimist, whilst trying to prove its illusion, speaks of it as by far the most happiness-

The position of Christians.

Transcendental faith.

The
practical
effects of
Christian
hope.

inspiring hope in the whole course of our earthly career. For its practical effects it is enough to point to the industrial progress, untiring philanthropy, and missionary enterprise of the foremost nations professing Christianity; whilst flagging energies and weariness of life supervene when its spiritual stimulus has ceased to exercise its power, when, amid baffled attempts, missed aims, and vain endeavours towards the attainment of individual happiness or the alleviation of sorrow and suffering in others, no room is left for hope in a brighter and better life hereafter, for which we are being trained and prepared here. The soul's desire "as fairest boon to die" is the natural outcome of ceaseless questionings in the maze of life which lead to no solution, whilst life conservation becomes a high moral duty when life's chief value lies in its being the indispensable antecedent to that which is to follow. For

"Whether we be young or old,
Our destiny, our being's heart and home,
Is with infinity, and only there;
With hope it is, hope that can never die,
Effort and expectation and desire,
And something evermore about to be."

—Wordsworth.

The
eschatology
of
Pessimism.

If Christian Eudaimonism thus proves vastly superior to scientific or evolutionary Optimism, it is still more so with regard to the eschatology of Pessimism and prevalent forms of modern

Buddhism, in both of which the "turbid torrent of doubt and despair" discharges itself into the dead sea of Nirvana, which, as we have shown already, resolves itself into the anticipated joy of eternal slumber in the silent grave, where lie buried the memories of a painful existence, and which serves as an escape from "reflected possibilities of pain;"

"The greatest misery is the longest life,
The greatest happiness is the longest sleep,
And, lo, the longest sleep of all is death!"

These lines, taken from the Pessimist's hymn-book, show how personal self-annihilation is considered here as man's final goal, a labyrinth of hopelessness without even the faint halo of the moral self-extinction taught by ancient Buddhism. It is the expression of a purely selfish feeling of ease prolonged through the eternities, and is inferior in ethical conception to the most "nebulous views of the last day," entertained by the least advanced of Christians who grasps the hope of the soul's immortality and finds consolation in the thought, however imperfectly apprehended, that "there remaineth a rest for the people of God." It is immeasurably below the conception of those who, with their Divine Master, having experienced, amid life's conflicts something like "the peace which brooded over Gethsemane," can confidently look forward to the

The
Pessimist's
goal.

Inferior
to the
Christian's
hope.

Agnosticism
and the
creed of
Christen-
dom.

Ethical
fervour and
faith in the
powers of
the world
to come.

Christian
idealism.

enjoyment of that heavenly peace which passes all understanding when the tumult of life has been hushed into the eternal silence. A philosophical creed which finds "existence burdensome, death desirable, and life detestable," or at best which merges faith in resignation and joy in sad tranquillity, is inferior, both intellectually and morally, to the creed of Christendom. Intellectually, because it only perceives the facts of existence from one point of view, without acquiring the power which the knowledge of the facts should impart; morally, because it does not supply the motor force which through knowledge, acts in changing the complexion of facts and counteracting obnoxious forces, *i.e.*, the power of faith, which transforms as well as overcomes the world. This ethical fervour, which can transmute the base into the noble, comes from a strong belief in the powers of the world to come. So far from lifting man out of his "narrow individual aims," and raising him above egoism, the hope of ending all misery in universal death, encouraging him to seek refuge from the storms of life in the haven of non-existence, not only amounts to "spiritual bankruptcy," but has a depressing effect on feeble minds amid their common duties here, rendering them prone to give up in lacrimose despondency.

In this way the superiority of Christian idealism

to Buddhistic quietism, as has been pointed out by economists is proved by the self-development and progress found in nations professing the former, and the marked absence of these qualities in those who profess the latter. Quietism also has a degrading effect on the stronger, who, like some typical Pessimists, nurse in morose seclusion a dull and sullen despair, instead of bracing up the mind in the exercise of healthy activity. Even such a remarkable example of boundless unselfishness as Spinoza shows how, in the ethical field of action, the self-preserving effort is the ultimate fact of life.

Buddhistio
quietism.

Its effects.

Spinoza.

"The foundation of virtue is no other than the effort to maintain one's own being, and man's happiness consists in the power of so doing."¹

A saying which is more than supplemented by another member of the same Jewish race in those memorable words which contain a nobler as well as a wider conception of the end and aim of existence: "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain" (Phil. i. 21).

St. Paul.

(d) As regards Belief in the Future of Society.

There remains yet one form of the philosophy of the future of man's existence to be considered, and that is faith in the future of society as the only belief left for noble-minded souls who

¹ Spinoza—*His Life and Philosophy*, by Frederick Pollock, p. 86.

have abandoned faith in immortality. It is sometimes called, or described as the "creed of science." Let us be henceforth satisfied, it seems to say, with a scientific knowledge of the facts of man's existence, or learn to adapt ourselves to them, having nothing but social ends in view.

"Scientific Meliorism" is the name that has been given to this new attempt to settle the future of mankind. The title is intended to express its twofold nature: it is the Creed of *Science*, and as such a purely social creed; while its name *Meliorism* implies that *amelioration* of man's social condition, not optimistic perfection, is its professed aim. Its highest aspiration is to satisfy, though not entirely, "the noble cravings of a socially developed race," to create "a new social order," in which inequality, which has "a distinct evolutionary justification," though no "justification in ethics," may disappear from the structure of society by means of "a gradual improvement (*i.e.*, morally) of individuals," and thus "the creation of a superior race, whose spontaneous impulses will construct and support an improved and improving social system."¹

Nature and
aim of the
Creed of
Science.

Means to be
adopted.

All this is to be effected by the individual efforts of enlightened human beings in the spirit of philanthropic co-operation. By the "inventive interference" of the human intellect, which is

¹ *Scientific Meliorism and the Evolution of Happiness*, by Jane Hume Clapperton, p. 284.

"an enormous cosmic force" in the universe, "human evolution advances towards a perfected state, determined by pure ethics." This is "*the law of the elimination of evil, i.e., under the spur of pain, discomfort, and injustice, it is impossible that man's endeavours should cease until every preventible evil of human life is overcome.*"¹

But here again infinite progression is excluded. The social millennium comes to an end with the extinction of human life on the globe, so that the "social end principle," making moral and material evolution to culminate in social happiness, fails to satisfy the mind which travels further than this, according to its own inherent laws, and it fails entirely to explain "the way in which the theme of his own immortality teases and hunts man," and for which the "collective pursuit of happiness" in this life affords no sufficient substitute. Christianity, on the other hand, acts as a spiritual force, enabling man to work out his "individual and social salvation." Under the spur of divine discontent true social progress is possible, and under divine direction the individual is fitted for it. But above and beyond this—and herein consists the superiority of Christian teleology, its breadth and comprehensiveness—Christianity supplies this type of a perfect social state in heaven, to the realization of which both social

Failure
of the
social end
principle.

The
spiritual
force of
Christianity.

Heaven
the type of a
social state.

¹ *Ibid.* cf. pp. 395, 396.

Limitations
of social
happiness.

and individual progress are only ancillary; whilst the limitations of social and individual happiness here, on account of their imperfection in quality and finite character in point of time, are a clear indication of that higher state of which they are but faint foreshadowings, like the penumbra of the sun, at the same time partially veiling and partially discovering the divine effulgence. The prospect of these higher spiritual possibilities silences individual complaints and prevents indolent or complacent acquiescence; in short, it serves the purpose of providentially training individuals in the race for a higher destiny.

The
mission of
Christianity.

It is the mission of Christianity to mould the individual for the conditions of social welfare, and to fit him for the fixed social conditions at any given time, and beyond this to render those social conditions in the discipline they afford, and the moral motives they supply, a further means of preparing him for the social conditions of that higher order of things in the spiritual kingdom, *i.e.*, the conditions necessary to his eternal welfare.

Misconcep-
tions of
adverse
criticism.

It is only by a wilful misconception of this comprehensive view of Christianity that adverse critics, directing their attacks against one of its positions only, attribute the non-success socially of Christianity, which they too hastily assume, to its being a moral force acting principally, if not solely, on the individual. In its effects on society, says a

modern socialist, it has signally and necessarily failed, giving this as his reason for preferring the "typical Aryan Ethics" of social utility to "the typical Semitic Ethics" of personal holiness, adding,

"It (*i.e.*, Socialism) has no sympathy with the morbid eternally-revolving-in-upon-itself transcendental morality of the Gospel discourses."¹

But if we take the Sermon on the Mount as the type of Gospel discourses, and the Beatitudes contained in it as the best expression of Christian Eudaimonism, with its blessings pronounced on the mourners, the meek, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peace-makers, and the persecuted for righteousness' sake, we can discover no justification for the above aspersion. On the contrary, the feeling of blessedness attached to the efforts of self-improvement and the exercise of self-suppression, to the peaceful temper of mind and patient temperament under provocation, would tend to social advantage; whilst the great reward in heaven promised to those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, even under the most adverse conditions of social environment, would, in the nature of things, help rather than hinder peaceful co-operation and social concord. We may quote in this place the concurrent sentiment of one who, though not a believer in Christianity, well defines religious blessedness thus:

The Sermon on the Mount the best expression of Christian Eudaimonism.

The great reward in heaven helpful to co-operation and concord.

¹ *The Religion of Socialism*, by Ernest Belfort Bax, pp. 97, 98.

“Religious blessedness consists in the pleasurable consciousness of the maximum of real sympathy with the moral tendencies of the not-self, religious perfection in the maximum of such sympathy. *Quand même*, it is not complete enough for enjoyment; and if this be so, it is clear that men may approach to religious excellence without possessing the moral self-satisfaction called religious peace, as they may approach moral excellence without possessing the physical self-satisfaction known as natural pleasure or happiness.”¹

Causes of
the incom-
pleteness of
happiness.

And we may add, by way of supplementing this definition from the Christian's point of view, that the incompleteness of the happiness arises from the moral and spiritual limitations of sublunary existence, whilst the yearning for completeness hints at another sphere of being where it shall find its fulfilment, “since the highest good for man is neither virtue nor happiness alone, but a moral world in which happiness is duly proportioned to merit.”²

Explanation
of the
existence of
human
suffering.

Thus, too, may be explained the existence of human suffering as far as it seems inconsistent with Eudaimonistic views of the universe; for suffering becomes merely a temporal phase of our existence, serving the purpose of either softening or solidifying the character. *Via crucis, via lucis*, is the motto of those who have embraced “the Religion of Suffering.” It teaches them to look “behind the veil.” There is no room left here for the melodramatic sentimentalism of those who

¹ *Natural Law*, an Essay in Ethics, by Edith Simcox, p. 196.

² Sidgwick's *History of Ethics*, p. 267.

know of no greater indulgence than the luxury of grief, as when one of them says, "The only blessing left me in the world is sometimes to weep." This only weakens manly endeavour. Nor is there room left here for the various forms of "Egoistic Hedonism," which hardens the heart without fulfilling its promise of individual happiness, since it is quite true "that a man is happiest who does not aim at his own happiness." Christians can be happy at the grave of all their earthly hopes and joys, knowing that the cultivation of resignation is a process of ripening for eternity. "They that deny themselves," says Bishop Wilson, "will be sure to find their strength increased, their affections raised, and their inward peace augmented." Human felicity is one of the objects of existence, but by no means the only or the highest one. That is none other than "the final beatification of our moral nature in its assimilation to God."

Indulgence in the luxury of grief weakens manly endeavour.

The effects of self-denial.

The highest object of existence.

Hence, too, the close connection between Christian Eudaimonism and Euthanasia, for if blessed in their lives, Christians are comforted by the thought in death that "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord." Standing before the "open door," to use the expression of one of the Stoics, the Christian makes his exit not only with calm composure, but in happy confidence, because to him the "future life is no more a riddle," as it was to Marcus Aurelius. As a wanderer in life's maze,

Eudaimonism and Euthanasia.

The exit of the Christian.

The
yearnings of
the heir of
eternity.

What he
works for.

His last
resource.

conscious of belonging to a higher sphere, far from his heavenly home, and ill at ease sometimes in his present and transitory abode, the heir of eternity, though erring, and, as it were, temporarily expelled from the regions of complete blessedness, yearns for the natural atmosphere of his immortal spirit. A fugitive and a wanderer though he be, he regards not his present banishment as a curse, but a curtailed blessing, waiting and preparing for that perfect consummation and bliss both of body and soul, when the portals shall be opened for him in the eternal mansions. Like St. Peter, in that crucial moment of doubt and perplexity, when the disciples vacillated, and the crowd doubted, and the learned sneered, in an age of scepticism in some respects not unlike our own, wearing itself out in trying to solve the last problems of life, death, and immortality, he says: "Lord, to whom shall we go, Thou hast the words of eternal life."



THE
TWO GEOLOGIES
A CONTRAST AND A COMPARISON
BY
W. SUNDERLAND LEWIS, M.A.

Argument of the Tract.

ONLY "Two Geologies" worthy of attention are known to exist. Very natural, therefore, is the prevalent desire to compare them together. Certain inquirers, however, assert roundly that this is an impossible operation. According to them these two systems are not of a nature to admit of being compared.

Although such a dictum cannot rightly suppress, it may well direct our inquiries. With such assertions in existence (not to say also in vogue) our first inquiry must be as to the nature of the difficulties which beset the comparison wished. We may even, in consequence, regard this inquiry as the most essential part of our task.

The first "difficulties" considered in compliance with this view of the case, are those arising from the serious extent to which these two earth-histories are found to differ from each other as to *origin, magnitude, purpose, and manner.*

The next "difficulties" considered are those due to the undeniably *imperfect* character of our *apprehensions* of parts of both the histories in question.

One important result—on the negative side—is to show how small an amount of weight is to be attached to any possible instances of apparent disagreement between two such stories as these.

Another result is to show—on the positive side—how great an amount of weight is to be attached to any possible instances of apparent correspondence between them; especially if these apparent correspondences are many in number; and even if some of them at first sight appear to be rather remote.

After this—the principles and possibilities of examination being thus ascertained—such a practical survey is attempted of some of the more important points in which these histories are thought to bear on each other, as seems sufficient for the purpose in hand.

The happy minimum, it is hoped, in the way of final result is to show that these "Geologies" are neither rivals nor foes; but, if anything, friends.

THE TWO GEOLOGIES.



I.—A NATURAL INQUIRY.



LITTLE need be said by way of justifying the assumption implied in our title. Except as a matter of curiosity, there are only "Two Geologies" that have any claim on our thoughts. The one is that which some believe to be contained in the Bible; the other is that which others have deduced from the crust of the Earth. A goodly number of reputably honest and sensible inquirers think highly of the first. A goodly number of similar inquirers think highly of the second. So far as we know, the same cannot be said of any others in existence. From a preliminary point of view, therefore, this seems sufficient to give them the pre-eminence claimed. No candid inquirer, things being so, will condemn either unheard; neither need any inquirer, however anxious, things being so, travel outside of their bounds.

Two
Geologies
only.

Neither to
be
condemned
unheard.

Their
relation to
each other.

This condition of affairs at once invites us to consider their mutual relations. Being thus co-ordinate, and thus exclusive, how do they bear on each other? Are they friendly powers? Or hostile ones? Do they stand before us as antagonists? Do they stand before us as friends? Every one will be interested in these questions, who is interested in the subject to which they refer.

II.—AN ARDUOUS TASK.

The answer
not easy.

It does not follow, however, by any means, that these questions are easy to answer because they are of so interesting a nature. Many most momentous questions, on the contrary, are so much the reverse of easy that they have never yet been disposed of. Nor are there wanting those persons, it is very well known, who do not hesitate to say as much of the questions before us. They roundly assert that these "Two Geologies" are of such a nature as not to admit of being compared together. They are never parallel, so they say, to each other. They are so wholly diverse that they cannot be submitted simultaneously to the eye of the mind. They can be examined separately, therefore, but not together.

The alleged
diversity
of the
Geologies.

Although such confident assertions cannot be accepted by us as final, they may be of much use

to us in the way of stimulus and guidance. The mere fact of their currency is some reason for inquiring into their value. Such a fact of itself affords some presumption that these assertions are something more than mere words. That can hardly be easy which a whole school of inquirers thus regards as impossible. There must be some difficulties in the way of making the comparison wished.

Difficulties
in the
way of
comparison.

It is in this direction, accordingly, in the present effort, that we would first of all move. Taking for granted that these difficulties exist, we would ask their nature and force. Besides being evidently first in order, such an inquiry is also first in importance. We do not know, indeed, that we should be wrong in speaking of it as the main part of our task. Certainly nothing satisfactory can be done on other points till this point be disposed of. How can we effectually attempt a discussion until we know its conditions? And how can we know these without some amount both of patience and care?

Their
nature
and force
to be
inquired
into.

III.—OBJECTIVE DIFFICULTIES.

AMONGST such "conditions" and difficulties we find one that depends on the elementary question of *source*. We would therefore consider this first. These two "histories" may be said to

The sources
of the two
histories.

Revelation
and ob-
servation.

present themselves to us from exactly opposite *sources*. In reading the Bible history, for example, we are confessedly making use, to a great extent, of other men's eyes. In the other history, on the contrary, to a great extent we are supposed to depend on our own. In the first instance the mental food which we are seeking after is, as it were, brought to our mouths. In the second instance we have to attempt the task of digging it up for ourselves. "Revelation," in short, is the channel of knowledge in the one case, and "observation" in the other. This initial difference places a real primary difficulty in the way of the comparison wished.

Photography
and
memory.

It is like the difficulty of comparing the photograph of a landscape with our own recollections of the landscape itself. So much is likely to be emphasized in the one case that is obscured in the other; so much is likely to be missed in the one case that is marked in the other, that to do this properly is not a task in every man's power. The mere untutored savage is often unable to do it at all. So intrinsically difficult is it to compare things which come to us from such different quarters.

The
question
of bulk.

Another, and perhaps a more serious difficulty, turns on the question of bulk. All the materials which have to be studied on one side of the case are to be found in one book or collection of books, of no very great size. As a matter of fact they do

not comprise more than a thousandth part of that book. This is not saying too much. A few separate historical chapters, a few scattered significant phrases, about make up the whole of what the Bible says to us of a geological kind! Whereas, on the other side, are not things wholly different with regard to this point? Is not the amount of material which requires to be examined with the purpose of thereby putting together a history of the earth, something, literally speaking as well as figuratively speaking, as wide as itself? Every yard of surface, every fathom of depth, every valley and hill, every cliff and beach, every mine and quarry, every "fault" and fossil has its inscription and tale; not to add also, that this is true (as it certainly is in a way) of every star in the sky. In this latter case, indeed, so far as concerns the question in hand, the message addressed to us is little less than the message of matter at large. But in the former case, on the contrary, so far as the same question is dealt with, the message addressed to us, as we have seen, is little more than that of a few lines in a book. This enormous difference of volume in connexion with the proposed objects of comparison implies, of course, a corresponding difficulty in rightly comparing them with each other. It is like the well-known difficulty of comparing a handbook with an encyclopædia; or an epigram with an epic; or a

Bible
material on
the subject
little.

Scientific
material
wide as the
earth.

The
message
of matter.

A few lines
in a book.

Instruments
of com-
parison.

grain of dust with a world. Something more than a certain acquired expertness of operation is necessary in order to do this aright. We want different instruments as well as diverse experiences in order to do this aright. We want powers of mind, in short, of both a microscopical and telescopical kind.

The
purpose
of the Bible
account.

A very important third consideration in the same direction is that of purpose or scope. This is about as different as it well can be in the two "histories" referred to. However narrowly limited the Earth history of the Bible may be in volume, it is still more so in aim. It nowhere professes to give us more than a partial view of the case. What is the earth itself mainly—in the Bible view of it—but the habitation of man? And what is man again mainly, in the same view, but the creature of God? Hardly anything, in fact, except that which bears on these aspects of the case, is mentioned at all in the Bible story of earth.

The
purpose of
the record
of the crust
of the earth.

Whereas, in the other "history," on the contrary, we find the line adopted to be almost exactly the reverse. In that history, at any rate, the appearance of man on the earth is so far from being regarded as the chief event of the past, that it is only presented to us as one event amongst many. In that history, also, the relation of man to God is so far from being a generally prominent and never forgotten consideration, that it can only be found

by us, if found at all, after diligent search. So at least we are told by some of those who profess to know that side best. On the other hand, however, this same account of the past experience of our earth is about as copious as it well can be on what the Bible view prætermits. How great is the variety, as well as how wonderful the number of the phenomena it discusses! How wonderful even the copiousness of the vocabulary which it invents and employs for that end! And how apparently perplexing, also, at times to the initiated themselves the task of employing it rightly! There appears, in short, to be as much complexity of aim on this side, as there is of simplicity on the other. The one is as wide as the other is restricted. The one is as eager to handle details as the other to leave them alone. Let us suppose a man directed to take a view of a city from some high ground some way off. Let us suppose him, also, in doing so, directed to give his special attention to its church-steeple and spires. And let us suppose him, finally, commissioned afterwards to give us a brief account of what he had so noted and seen. That account would be like the Bible version of the history of our earth. It is a resumé, in the main, of those features in it which, as it were, point us directly to heaven. And it touches on other things only so far as is needed for a proper comprehension of these. But now let us suppose something, on

The
copiousness
of the
material
record
concerning
what the
Bible says
nothing
about.

Illustrative
suppositions

Illustrative
suppositions.

the other side, of a widely dissimilar kind. Let us suppose a well-equipped company of professional surveyors to present themselves at the gates of that city. Let us suppose them also to enter those gates with the avowed purpose of diligently traversing and accurately measuring all its houses and streets. And let us suppose them afterwards to try and furnish us with an elaborate and minute and comprehensive "blue book" of all they had so noted and seen. That would correspond with the account which science has attempted of the history of the earth. It is a detailed description of the things which are to be seen in it when our eyes are directed below. And it deals with higher things only so far as their secret foundations can be traced, as it were, among these. Such is the enormous difference as to object and scope by which these two accounts are distinguished. It is easy to see how it tells on the question of comparing them with each other. Only seldom, and then mainly indirectly, with such opposition of aim, can they affect one another at all.

The two
Geologies
only rarely
and in-
directly
affect each
other.

The
use of
pictures
or scenes.

A further difficulty of scarcely less importance turns on the question of manner. In what manner does Scripture present that to us on which it does touch in this matter? In the main, we reply, if not in all cases virtually, by means of pictures or scenes. That this is so in the teaching of Scripture on other matters, has long been per-

ceived. "Thou spakest in vision unto Thy saints" (Psalm lxxxix. 19, R.V.). So it was that the ancient "Seer"—apparently therefore so called—received his instruction. So it was also that as a "Prophet," he "spake it out" in his turn. Very naturally, therefore, in the matter before us, we find a similar method adopted. Those geological topics which are referred to by Scripture are presented to us in this shape. Revelation conveys to us what it has to say on these topics in a succession of views, as it were. In a succession of merely outline views, a succession of glimpses, in fact. A succession of outlines, also, which only amount when all taken together—in consequence of that limitation of purpose before adverted to—to a kind of small Portfolio of Sketches of a few selected occurrences in the history of the earth. How widely different things are on the other side of the case on both of these points is very well known, and has in part been referred to already. What science offers us in regard to the history of the earth, is offered to us rather in the shape of maps, than of pictures or views. These same maps, also, are not mere outline ones, but of the most elaborate kind; and are intended, in fact, when all taken together, to furnish us with nothing less than a kind of Universal Atlas of the whole terrestrial past. The effect of this difference on the question before us is as serious on the one

Scripture
treatment of
Geological
topics.

Science
furnishes
maps.

An atlas
of the
terrestrial
past.

Increased
difficulty of
comparison.

hand as it is obvious on the other. That which was difficult before in regard to comparison, is rendered more difficult now. That which was circuitous previously in the way of relation, becomes more circuitous still. Such difference in expression, in short, almost doubles the effect of all those differences before named. Is there *any* greater bar, indeed, than that of diversity of speech to the comparison of ideas?

IV.—SUBJECTIVE DIFFICULTIES.

Uncertainty
as to the
teaching
of the two
Geologies.

To these objective difficulties must be added one of a subjective kind. Our own position in this matter is not always such as to facilitate the object in view. We cannot always be sure that we really *know* what these respective “Geologies” teach. For all we can tell, very often, we may be greatly misunderstanding the true significance of their respective “pictures” and “maps;” and so greatly misinterpreting the true teachings of either or both. How great an additional difficulty is involved in such a condition of things, it is hardly necessary to point out. We are in comparative darkness, even where the light is clear, if our vision is dim. Even the best material for comparison cannot be used for comparison, if we only know it imperfectly. Yet, that such is often the case, in this instance, on both sides, can be readily shewn; and must be carefully weighed.

Dimness
of our
vision.

Take the Biblical side to begin. Looked at in that general way which is all we now need to attempt, is not the following a fair statement of the true position of things on this side? In certain matters—matters, doubtless, of the highest importance from the standpoint of the Bible itself—no amount of difference exists which is worth speaking of here as to the right view of its teaching. The long-established and widely accepted creeds of the Church at large are a standing testimony to this fact. But the case is notoriously and widely different when we turn aside to many of those merely collateral questions which have to be dealt with when we endeavour, from the contents of the Bible, to compose a history of the earth. It is no reproach whatever to the Bible itself—it is no especial discredit to the interpreters of the Bible—that this should be so often the case. Why should a Book with such different objects in view, speak more than it does about these? Why should we be surprised, also, if we sometimes find the little which it does say to us on these collateral matters, to be not only brief but obscure? Considering the widely different times—times as different often from each other as they are from our own—at which its various portions were produced, on any view of the case, it is difficult to see, with our limited powers, how such a thing could be helped. At any rate, there

The
Biblical
side.

Agreement
as to
doctrine.

Divergence
of opinion
as to the
Biblical
history of
the earth.

No approach
to a Creed
on collateral
Biblical
matters.

can be no manner of doubt as to its being the fact. It is not necessary to give illustrations of this. On many of these Biblically collateral and merely subsidiary matters it is simply notorious, that, at the present moment, there is no approach to a "Creed." Instead of anything like a general consensus of opinion, on the contrary, there is the widest possible divergence of opinion with regard to some of such points. And, instead of harmonious views, there are views so entirely opposed that the only traceable resemblance between them is to be found in the dire tenacity of grasp with which they are held by their respective adherents. How is it possible, therefore, for any unprejudiced inquirers to feel very sure on such points? Or, how can such inquirers be expected to regard such interpretations as things which ought to be pressed? Clearly, there cannot be very much assurance of certainty where there is such abundance of dispute.

Uncertainty
on the
scientific
side.

Something the same can be shown to be true, also, on the other side of this case. There is a similar nucleus of certainty, a similar fringe of uncertainty, from this stand-point as well. All who know anything of the matter must confess that it would be very surprising indeed if the greater part of the main teachings of Geological Science, formed as they are on such a long accumulated and generally concordant induction of

facts, and agreed in as they are by almost all who have duly studied the subject, should turn out to be false. But there are numerous points of detail, on the other hand, for all that, of which the same cannot be said. We see no reproach at all in this fact, as we saw none in the other, to this department of knowledge. Even weapons of precision may be sometimes so used as to go wide of the mark. None do so more, in fact, or with less provocation, if so we may speak. Besides which, the record which has to be searched in this instance is so enormous in bulk, as we have already observed; and the whole time covered by it is, on any showing, so exceedingly great; and the acknowledged imperfections and breaks in it are so many and wide; and the degree of really skilled attention as yet given to it is so infinitesimal in comparison with its difficulties and bulk, that there is nothing to be wondered at, if in some of the details of the question there should occasionally occur even a certain succession of upsettings of views. Such, at any rate, in not a few instances, has been the case before now. Not very long since, a known geological author did not scruple to say, in speaking of some of the results of the "Challenger" expedition, that they had "revolutionized" geological science. It would be very ungenerous, if not also very illogical, to give too literal a force to these words. But they are words

Differences
on points
of detail.

Successive
upsettings
of views.

Reversals
of judgment
point to
uncertain
result.

which at least justify us, as impartial observers, in feeling some hesitation at times; and in doubting occasionally whether, with the name of Science, we obtain its certainty too. So many reversals of judgment do certainly point us to some dubiety of result.

V.—AN IMPORTANT RESULT.

Circum-
stances
being as
they are
disagree-
ments
between
the two
Geologies
of little
weight.

THIS review of our “difficulties” leads us at once—and this, indeed, is one reason why we have dwelt thus upon them—to a result of much worth. It enables us at once to dispose entirely of the negative side of the comparison wished. Suppose it should turn out, on making inquiry, that there are certain points in regard to which these two “histories,” at first sight, do not appear to agree. In the circumstances detailed by us, is it not at once evident that this is of very small weight? Could any eventuality be much more likely, could any issue be much less relevant, *those circumstances being such as we have now seen them to be?* With synthesis here, and analysis there; with much restriction here, and next to none there; with a few simple “sketches” on this side, and many elaborate “maps” upon that; with a spiritual aim in one case, and a physical aim in the other; and, above all, perhaps, with the true significance of both, in so many respects, a matter “sub judice” still; it is difficult to see how it could be always

possible to avoid such oppositions in look. We all know how different the same landscape—how still more different the same sky—appears by night and by day. How wholly altered also the same mountains look when viewed from above or below. And beyond all, perhaps, how hardly recognizable sometimes are the successive views we obtain of the same microscopical object when we examine it with different “powers.” It is one illustration of this in another direction, that there are photographs in existence of some of the starry nebulæ as seen by telescopes of different powers, in which it is simply impossible for the observer to trace any likeness at all. But for the description given, in fact, no one would have supposed them intended to represent the same thing. Shall we attach any importance, therefore, to mere variations of look in such a proposed comparison as the present? A comparison in which, as we have seen, it is only seldom that we shall be really viewing the same object at all. A comparison in which we shall do so, moreover (even where such is the case), not only with different “powers,” but under different “lights,” and from different quarters as well. And a comparison, yet further, in which we shall often be in a state of the greatest uncertainty, on both sides, as to whether and how far we really see things as they are. Clearly apparent disagreements, under such conditions, *prove* nothing

The same objects from different points of view.

Photographs of the same nebulæ.

Apparent disagreements unimportant.

at all against the perfect reliability of either of the histories which produce them. If anything indeed, their presumptive evidence may be on the other side of the case. Where there is so much diversity of character, and so much uncertainty of interpretation as there are in this case, it seems only consistent that there *should be*, sometimes, *some opposition in look*.

Apparent
opposition
to be
expected.

VI.—OTHER IMPORTANT RESULTS.

OTHER results of weight follow from the same review of our “difficulties,” on the positive side of the case.

It follows, *e.g.*, that hardly any appearances of *agreement* between the two systems now under survey can be wholly without worth. The very considerations, in fact, which tend in one direction on the negative side of this inquiry tend in the opposite direction on this. An instance of *diversity* between the two vocabularies of two very different tongues is wholly unimportant on account of the fact that they *are* different tongues. It is only what we expect. An instance of *coincidence* between them—on the very same account—is a thing to be marked. That is *not* what we expect. It can hardly mean nothing. It may mean a great deal.

Value of
apparent
agreements

One
coincidence
may be
worth a
great deal

It follows also, of course, that the occurrence of

more than one of such apparent instances of agreement in such circumstances is still more worthy of note. It is hardly possible, indeed, to say to what a degree of argumentative value a very large number of these unexpected coincidences may not ultimately arrive. It cannot be necessary to dwell on this truth. Whenever we act on circumstantial evidence, whenever we arrive at a conclusion by means of scientific induction, we are practically recognising its existence. In all such cases, we are depending on the acknowledged strength of *accumulated appearances of agreement*.

Many agreements may be of irresistible force.

It follows, lastly, that this is true *in the circumstances before us*, even of *remote* appearances of agreement. It is much the same here, in fact, as it is with those linguistic resemblances referred to just now. If the two vocabularies compared together are such as belong to widely different ages of time, and wholly diverse groups of languages, we attach considerable importance even to resemblances between them which are not very close. The occurrence of modified consonants, or even of wholly different vowels in the case of such verbal resemblances, is not considered to detract much, in such a case, from their worth. It is even possible, to a certain extent, that these same things may be rather considered as adding thereto. In such *remote* comparisons, in fact, these *remote*

Remote appearances of agreement of great value.

resemblances seem rather the thing to expect.¹ Even so may it be, therefore, in regard to those two systems—those two visibly alien and remote systems, as we think we have proved them to be—which it is here desired to compare. Nothing may be more eventually reliable than those correspondences between them, which it may be difficult to see at first sight. And nothing may be found, therefore, when they are seen, to tell more on the mind. At any rate, correspondences of this kind, even if others are discoverable, must not be passed by.

VII.—A PARTIAL SURVEY.

WITH these conclusions in mind we may now hope to proceed with advantage to the concrete side of our case. Having learned the kind of things

¹ The case of the Greek word *θυγάτηρ* (thugateer) and the English word daughter, may be taken as a very familiar instance in point. Examined letter by letter, how very remote is the resemblance between these two words. The one is a trisyllable, the other a dissyllable. The *th* of the one is the *d* of the other. The separated *u a* of the first becomes the combined *au* of the second. The *g* is sounded in one case, and mute in the other. Yet any standard derivative dictionary will show us that the two words are universally acknowledged to spring from one "root." And that all the more, in a sense, because of the existence of the dissimilarities we have noted. The development of such dissimilarities from the same "root," is just the thing to be expected, in fact, in such different "atmospheres" as those of "English" and "Greek."

to expect, we shall be better able, we hope, to judge of the things we may find, in the actual field of survey. And we shall be able, we hope also, to do this sufficiently, without surveying the whole. We can judge of the rest of the field by a part. A judicious sample of resemblances may do as much for us in the direction desired, as if we had the whole harvest brought home.

Samples of
resem-
blances.

For a first instance in such a selection we take a very wide view of the matter in hand—the widest, perhaps, in our power. In Scriptural language, we ask, first, about the kind of “times” which have “passed over” this earth. Of what sort have these been? ‘They have been “times” of many kinds, not only of one; they have been a series of periods; a procession of ages; a chain of developments.’ So the one “story” replies. So it is, we say, that that “story” bids us interpret the diversified “strata” beneath us. Any geological “Table of Formations” will show this to be true. The way, on the other hand, in which the “story” of Scripture, with different objects in view, gives an answer to the same question, is as easily seen. We read there, *e.g.*, of “purposes” formed before “eternal times;” of certain “mysteries hid from ages,” but at last “made known” to mankind; of such a season, also, in coming years, as “the dispensation of the fulness of times;” and of “ages and ages,” in the last place. as yet to be

The
‘times’ of
Scripture.

The
strata of
geology.

‘Purposes.’
‘Mysteries.’

‘Ages and
ages.’

Instru-
ments of
measure-
ment.

seen. Such, exceedingly briefly, are the answers given by our two authorities on this point. Comparing them together, we think that they present us with a first parallelism of the kind we have named. Of course, the respective stand-points and dialects of the two histories which furnish them, being in so many ways so vastly diverse as we have seen them to be, the respective "ages" described by them, naturally enough, are diverse also in kind. The instruments of measurement, as it were, are different, but the plan is the same; and the same general idea, viz., that of a succession of ages, is clearly traceable in them both. And this, we think, considering what they respectively are, is worthy of note.

Leading
features of
successive
times.

We turn, next, to a somewhat more restricted, but still very general thought. By what leading features, of a physical kind, have these successive times been distinguished? The answer which the "history" of science believes itself able to give to this question, in a summary way, is of the following kind. There was intense heat, to begin. There has been steady cooling down ever since. That cooling down led in time to the condensation of vapour, the consequent formation of water, and the subsequent solidification of fluids. That same cooling down when carried still further, as we are constantly told that it will be, may be expected to lead in turn—if we may judge by the present appearance of the smaller planet Mars (which as

The
scientific
account.

being smaller in bulk is believed to have cooled at a more rapid rate than our own)—to the gradual increase of dry land and diminution of sea; and so may be expected at last—if we may judge, again, from the apparent experience of the still smaller globe of the moon, and from what is believed of the general tendency of the solar system at large—to bring the earth to such a comparatively waterless condition of things as seems to be discovered now in the moon. Speaking exceedingly broadly, this is the attempted scientific map of the physical history of the earth. We turn from it, next, to that exceedingly interesting but exceedingly scanty collection of sketches by which the Scripture is found to give us, with different objects in view, its account of this matter. And the following will be found, it can be easily shown, the succession of pictures so given. A picture, first, of a condition of things which might have been caused by great heat. A picture, next, of a wide sea apparently without bounds. A picture, afterwards, of the first appearance of land. A picture, afterwards still, of the earth itself as being “stored with fire.” And a picture finally—to omit other points—of a “new heavens” and a “new earth” which shall come into existence after the “earth which now is” has been “destroyed” in a sense by that “fire.” And we think we see here, therefore, another parallelism of the kind we

The
Scriptural
account.

Remarkable
succession
of resem-
blances.

have named. True enough it is that we are not absolutely sure, at present, on either side, of our ground. *All* the inferences here drawn, *all* the interpretations here given, cannot as yet be said, beyond question, to have it all their own way. Still less, of course, can it be said of all of them, that they will remain unchallenged in future. But, even so, it appears to us that there is something fairly noticeable in this general aspect of things. Considering how almost antagonistic, as well in manner and structure as in outlook these two “histories” are, there would have been nothing at all surprising, if, in this particular direction, there had been no resemblance whatever between them. This curious *succession* of resemblances, therefore—even if it *be* uncertain in parts—is not to be wholly despised.¹

The
condition of
the planet
Jupiter.

The next possible resemblance is one which arises out of this last. Amongst the Earth ages of the past, according to Science, there must have been one such age in which the condition of the outside of this earth corresponded to that condition in which the planet Jupiter—in consequence, it is supposed, of its far greater magnitude and slower rate of cooling—has only just come. We may describe that planetary condition as differing in

¹ In this connexion the remarkable statement at the end of Rev. xxi. 1, may not be considered by some persons to be wholly unworthy of note.

two ways from that of this earth. With more heat and light, there is more obscurity, too. In its own immediate celestial neighbourhood, that enormous planet is believed to do a good deal more than reflect the light of the sun. It is said to approach nearer than the earth does, by a considerable degree, to a solar condition ; and has even been described in consequence as acting as a kind of deputy sun to its smaller system of worlds. On the other hand, this same planet is also believed to be surrounded by so perpetual and dense an envelope of tempestuous clouds, as to make it very doubtful whether any human eyes have ever looked yet on its surface ; and to make it equally doubtful, therefore, whether similar eyes (were such in existence upon it) could ever penetrate as far as to the further side of that thick garment of vapour. To such eyes, consequently, while there might be a good deal of "light," there would be no appearance of "sun." Just the same follows, therefore, as to the condition of things on this planet of ours at that period in its past when, in consequence of its smaller dimensions, it is believed to have succeeded in reaching the present condition of that more slow-cooling globe. To human eyes here, also, had there been such here at that time, there would have been a good deal of "light." To human eyes here, also, at the same time, there would have been no appearance of "sun." This so far tallies

Approaches almost to a solar condition.

Its surroundings.

How it appears to a human eye.

Tallies with
Scripture.

with the fact, that the other history speaks of the existence of light before it speaks of the shining of the sun, as to be worthy, we think, of some note. It is to be noted, at any rate, that the order named is not of the opposite kind. And it is still more to be noted that this apparent agreement should come to us in the way that it does. As it were we hear a certain note sounding up there in the history of matter. We hear another note sounding down here in the story of God. When we sound them together, though so wholly disconnected, they seem to accord. Is this a thing to pass by?

Concentric
succession
of heavens

We notice yet another probable instance of correspondence of a purely physical kind. Round about this our earth, as we look from it outward, what is seen by our eyes? A wide expanse, on all sides, of seemingly unlimited depth. And, in that boundless expanse, at gradually lessening depths, what do we further behold? As it were, a kind of concentric succession of "heavens." The fearfully immeasurable "heaven" of the stars appears to be the outside of all these. Far inside that is, so to call it, the "heaven" inhabited by the clouds. While, within this again, and, as it were bathing our persons, is the "heaven" tenanted by the birds. This innermost portion, moreover, discharges a double function of a very remarkable kind. By its pressure, on the one hand, it helps in preventing the waters of the rivers and seas

from passing away into vapour ; and so may be said, as it were, to hold them down in their place. By its comparative density, on the other hand, it helps both to lift and to keep up the floating clouds in their place. All this, according to science, we now know to be true. All this, also, was not known by us at one time as is known by us now. All the more carefully is it to be noted, therefore, how the language of Scripture, in its account of our atmosphere, seems to accord with this riper knowledge of ours. It does so, *e.g.*, when it makes mention of a “firmament” or “expanse” (R.V.); when it speaks of that “expanse” as being the home at once of the heavenly bodies, and the clouds, and the birds ; and when it describes it also as being appointed amongst other things for the purpose of separating the waters “above” from the waters “below.” Here, again, it is noticeable to find two such diverse “instruments” agreeing together so well ! And still more noticeable, again, to find them *not* doing so perfectly, till we get the scientific instrument, as it were, in good tune.

Accordance
of Scripture
with riper
knowledge.

The
accordance
greater as
science
advances.

We turn next, to consider the history of the earth in connexion with the organisms upon it. The most prominent feature of this view of the subject, according to science, is that of progression or growth. If there has not been strict “evolution,” there has been continual advance in the life-

Advance in
the life-
history of
the earth

history of the earth. Notwithstanding the notorious "imperfection of the geological record," and notwithstanding, also, the great extent to which some of the conclusions of palæontology in this respect are based on negative evidence, and the consequent uncertainty attaching to all endeavours to fix the accurate time of the first appearance of particular forms of life on the earth, this appears to be true. The more differentiated has succeeded the less so, as a general rule. Even if there have been eddies as it were, there have been no permanent reversions, in this current of growth. This, as briefly as possible, may be offered as the scientific history of the "life" of the earth. Is it necessary to point out that we have something correspondent on the other side of the case? No direct enunciation of any such rule, it is true, is to be found on that side. That would be singularly unlike the generally undidactic character, on such points, of the Bible. What we rather find, and what is much more to the purpose, is that which seems to be a description of the necessary consequences of that rule. We have "visions" of plants and herbs before we have descriptions of animal life. The oviparous animals of the "air" and "water" are described to us before such mammalian animals as the beasts of the earth. And it is only after all these that "man" stands before us as the highest of all. As a general resemblance, therefore, considered

No
permanent
reversions
in the
current of
growth.

Resem-
blance to
Bible
account.

thus far, we could not well look for much more. More could not be expected.
 It is something, in the two cases, to find that the order observed is not on *opposite* lines.

It is possible, also, if we mistake not, to carry this comparison further. According to the geological account of the past experience of the earth in regard to the organisms upon it, certain marked periods of special life development have characterized it at times. Or more correctly, perhaps, Marked periods of life-development. certain periods of the past have bequeathed to us a peculiar abundance of evidence serving to show that such was the character of those times. If we look into the current illustrations and "restorations" of geological text-books, we see at once what the chief features of these periods are. Speaking very generally, and passing over those earliest Palæozoic formations which are believed to contain traces of both animal and vegetable submarine life, but not of such a nature as to lend themselves readily to striking pictorial representation, we come, first, amongst those that do, to certain other Palæozoic "formations" characterized especially by great copiousness of dry-land vegetation; then to certain Mesozoic "formations," Contents of Palæozoic formations. marked especially by abundant Saurian or similar life; then to certain Tertiary "formations," Other formations. distinguished in like manner by their gigantic mammalian life; and so, lastly, to certain Post-Tertiary or Quaternary "formations," distinguished by the

The way-
marks
of the
Biological
past.

first appearance of man on the scene. These, we say, are the chief "way-marks," according to the one geology, of the Biological past. These are the pictures which have been selected for us *by purely geological thought*. What is taught us by the other? What are the "pictures" which that "system of pictures" presents to us on this matter? Are they not very much the same, in a general way, with those on the opposite side? Considering them only as popular views—as views therefore taking cognisance only of the more obvious features before them, but not, therefore, by any means denying others of a less salient description—do they not present us with a degree of similarity to those on the scientific side, which cannot be denied? We pass over, of course, as before, what may or may not have been the case as to marine life of various kinds at that time when little or nothing seems to be shown us by the Scriptural sketches except a vast, if not universal, expanse of ocean. But, after that, do we not come to very much the same as we came to on the opposite side? To a "day," first, marked chiefly by its abundance of plants? To another "day," in which what we see principally are "flying fowl," or "great sea monsters" (R.V.) in abundance? To a third "day," characterized by the multitudinous presence in it of the "beasts of the field?" And so to another part of that "day," in which

Undeniable
similarity
of features.

The days of
Genesis.

the most conspicuous object is the appearance of man? Surely, notwithstanding what has been said against it by some, there is something noteworthy in this. The facts are simple, the inference plain.

The appearance of man.

When the geologist departs from his usual custom, and endeavours to turn his attempted "maps" of the past into "pictures," the principal pictures which come out, on his own showing, are those successive four we have seen. When we examine the "sketches," on the other hand, which are presented to us by the Bible, when apparently referring to the same succession of ages, we find these sketches to be thus strikingly similar, in a general way, to those pictures—the only apparent difference between them being such as might have been expected from the different artists at work. Surely under the circumstances considered, this is even more satisfactory than if they had presented the appearance (as some seem to require) of *fac-similes* of each other.

Geological map.

'Sketches presented by the Bible.'

We notice, in passing, another point, which appears not without weight. The modern doctrine of evolution may be said to postulate the doctrine of heredity as its base. The very idea of steadily transmitted and gradually accumulated "variations," whether of structure or material, of course implies the operation of the previous principle, that "like" begets "like," as a rule. It is well known, however, that at one time this was

The doctrine of heredity.

'Like begets like.'

not supposed to be so. Bees, for example, were once supposed to be producible from the carcasses of dead calves. Certain birds, also, were reported, in their earlier stages, to grow upon trees. It is only recently, in fact, and as the result of many experiments, and of more controversies, that the observation of men seems at last to have pretty well settled this rule. All the more, therefore, is it to be noted that, on the Scriptural side, it seems to have been announced from the first. Of all the "herbs" and "birds;" of all the "fishes" and "beasts;" of man himself at their head; of man himself (apparently) both before and after his "fall," it is said with reiterated emphasis, in the very beginning of Scripture, that they are "after their kind." There would be almost a difficulty indeed, from another point of view, in the exceptional explicitness of the teaching of Scripture on such a physical topic, were it not for the intimate bearing of that topic on such peculiarly Scriptural subjects of thought as the calamitous "fall" and subsequent "restoration" of the race of mankind. But, this being so, we find nothing in this explicitness but what is at once pertinent and spontaneous. For reasons of its own, in other words, we find Scripture laying that down as a broad and general rule, which men, in a similar way, have found true. Also we find Scripture announcing this at the beginning, and men discovering it at the end.

Announced
by Scripture
from the
first.

Explicitness
of Scripture
teaching
on the point.

Priority of
Scripture
announcements.

Also, once more, we find Scripture doing so, as it were, in a phraseology of its own. On every one of these accounts the coincidence before us seems deserving of note.

The last point to be noticed by us is one which relates to the special story of Man. According to the one "history," his appearance on earth is not to be regarded by any means as an unanticipated occurrence. It is rather to be regarded as the last "term," as a mathematician would say, of a "series"—the principle of that series being that every succeeding term in it should excel the preceding one much; and that the last term of all, therefore, should excel in turn *all* the preceding ones much. We have already seen reason for believing that, in a general way, Scripture concurs in this view. What we now wish to notice is that the Scripture seems to supplement it as well; and so, of course, to confirm it still more. To "supplement" it, on the one hand, in the way of extension. We say in the way of extension, because in that "new" humanity the finally manifested glory of which Scripture bids us expect on this earth in the future, we seem to discern a still further "term" in that life-series just named. We call it so, first, because Scripture describes that new humanity as much in advance of any humanity previously prevailing on earth. The finally perfected "new man" is to be in every respect a

The special story of man.

The last of the series.

Scripture extends this view.

A still further term in the series.

The new
humanity.

higher man than the man of the present. Even in regard to bodily endowment, this is to be so. "Power" is to mark him instead of present "weakness"; "glory" instead of "dishonour"; "incorruption" instead of "corruption"; the "spiritual," in a word, instead of the "animal."

The person
and work of
the great
Restorer.

We call it such, also, because that new humanity, for all this, is to be on the same lines as it were as the old. As the Apostle teaches us, the change in question will consist rather in a "putting on" than a "putting off"; a further endowment rather than an entire obliteration; an eternal glorification, rather than a despairing destruction of that which previously was. On the other hand, we think that Scripture is here supplementary to science in the direction of depth. We say of depth, because of the fact that in the Person and Work of that Divine Restorer whom Scripture reveals to us, we are taught to see that spiritual energy which has already begun, and is finally to complete the "new creation" in question. To every careful reader of Scripture this is abundantly plain. "Created in Christ Jesus." This is everywhere on this subject the Scriptural creed. Thus it is that the "new man," according to it, is brought into being. Just as it was, in fact, according to Scripture again, with all previous inferior life and existence, even so is it here. The same Divine Hand—the same appointed Hand—

accomplishes all. By Him God made the worlds. Without Him was not anything made that was made. By Him unfallen man was created at first. By Him, finally, fallen man is to be more restored; and so to shine forth, finally, in every respect, a new "creation" in Him. This is how Scripture in this matter explains and supplements all. This is how, on this question, it surpasses Science and confirms it as well. Rightly, therefore, do we put down this crowning "resemblance" as the last on our list.¹

VIII.—A BRIEF REVIEW.

To see the value and effect of this selection of resemblances, when they are taken together and considered as a whole (which is how we find them, in fact) the following further points should be briefly noted about them, viz. :—

Value and
effect of the
resem-
blances.

First, that some among them are compound resemblances, if so we may speak; and that they present us, therefore, when united, with very much more even than the proverbial strength of a "bundle of sticks." To that extent, in fact, we

Compound
resem-
blances.

¹ The reader who would see this last point more fully worked out is referred to the writer's Present Day Tract on *Christ and Creation*, No. 52, where various other correspondences leading up to this one, or involved in it, are also discussed.

have rather the strength of a *bundle of bundles*, in the collection before us.

Variety
in nature
and source.

Next, that they are marked among themselves by a very considerable variety both of nature and source, many different portions of Scripture and many far-apart fields of science having furnished them to us; and that this also tells largely, and that wholly favourably, on their united effect.

Promising
character.

Thirdly, that some among them at least are of a character to give good promise of more, being themselves resemblances which were not seen by us a little while back. A growing tree bears more and better fruit every year which goes by.¹

¹ It may be mentioned here, perhaps, that such authorities as Sir W. Dawson and Mr. Howorth, in his work on *The Mammoth and the Flood*, seem to suggest the possible confirmation in the future of a correspondence of this kind between the so-called "glacial epoch" of Science and the "Deluge" of the Bible. And the thing certainly seems quite conceivable, if we cannot say more of it now. What is certain in the matter is twofold. In both cases we seem to see evidence of one race of mankind in a comparatively primitive condition as to the arts and so on, being followed by another race in a more advanced condition. In the one case these two races are represented as separated by a glacial period; in the other, by a diluvial. What seems possible in the matter is that these two periods may prove eventually to be two different views of one scene—the comparatively southern diluvial action of Scripture (apparently, Gen. ix. 11-15, the last of a long protracted intermittent succession of catastrophical actions) being found attributable in some way to the glacial action of which science tells us in the higher latitudes of Europe and Asia. This seems so far conceivable, we submit, as to be not unworthy of mention in the present connexion.

Lastly, it is to be noted of all these resemblances now, as we have noted of some of them previously, that they occur and are found in a department of inquiry where there might easily have been none; and that they thence derive, as a group, a strong extra claim on our attention and thought. Seeing them *anywhere* is seeing that which is far too considerable both as to number and structure, far too independent as to bearing and source, and far too hopeful in regard to prospect, to be fitly passed by. Seeing them *where they are* is like hearing a chorus where there might have been silence; or finding a forest where we had not expected a tree; or discovering a city in the midst of the desert. Whatever their intrinsic significance, it becomes many times greater in such an environment!

They occur where there might have been none.

Their significance greatly enhanced.

Altogether, therefore, what they demand from us is, that they should be accounted for in some way. We should certainly say the same in any of the three illustrative cases of which we have spoken. "Where do these voices come from?" "Who planted this forest?" "How did this city come here?" So we should exclaim, almost instinctively, in such cases as these. Shall we say anything less, therefore, of such a chain of coincidences—of such a remarkable growth—of such a collection of edifices as have here presented themselves to our gaze? How came they

They must be accounted for.

to be here? *Being such as they are, and the locality in which we find them being such as we have seen it to be, how came they to be here?* We have not only the right to ask this question: it would be almost imbecile to do less.

They
can be
accounted
for.

It would be something like imbecility also not to see at once that this question *can* be answered with ease. So far, *i.e.*, as it is of such a nature as to admit of being dealt with by human intelligence it can at once be answered with ease. A peculiarly obvious and simple suggestion is all that is needed, in fact, for this end. Only suppose that the two systems compared, as a matter of fact, are both founded on truth, and the thing sought is obtained. We have a supposition before us then which makes the results found by us at least conceivable things. Rather, we have before us then, if we mistake not, that which seems especially calculated to fit the exact phenomena found. On the one hand, we have those surface forces tending to diversity of which we have spoken, which seem fitted to account satisfactorily for the diversities we have marked. On the other hand, we have those sub-forces tending to similarity of which we have also spoken, which seem fitted to account satisfactorily for the similarities we have noticed. In regard to both these sets of effects, also, we have that apparent degree of energy before us which seems to account sufficiently

Forces
accounting
for
diversities
and
similarities.

for the approximately ascertained proportion of both. How is it that we find any lights at all in this field of inquiry? How is it, on the other hand, that finding some, we find so much darkness around them? Why are these lights not more than they are? Why are they so many? Why so bright as they are? Why not more bright than they are? All these are very natural and reasonable inquiries. To all of them it appears to us that our present hypothesis gives at least a reasonable reply.

Accounted
for by
present
hypothesis

At present, moreover, we do not know of another hypothesis of which the same can be said. This is the last point to be noted. No other supposition is in existence which seems even in this way to attempt to grapple with *all* the exigencies of the case. For the present, therefore, the hypothesis in question is in possession of the field. It is an apparently capable explanation—it is the only known explanation—of *all* the facts of the case.

IX.—A SATISFACTORY CONCLUSION.

WE seem, therefore, to be in a position now to revert to our first question of all. We are in a position, at any rate, to give such an answer to it as may suffice for the present. We then asked to know the mutual relations of the two accredited “earth-histories” before us. Are they friendly?

The
relation
of the
two earth-
histories.

Are they unfriendly? That was the point in debate.

.What we have seen in this inquiry enables us, we trust, to say now in reply :

Conclusions. First, that the two systems are not rivals in any degree;

Secondly, that nothing whatever is known at present to prove them to be foes;

Thirdly, that there is much on the contrary, which is best accounted for, by supposing them to be friends; and that none the less truly, but rather the more so—under the circumstances—because apparently in an undemonstrative way.

Whether our readers will be as satisfied as we are ourselves of the correctness of this reply, it is not for us, of course, to pronounce; but we are very sanguine in hoping that they will acknowledge at least, that there is a good deal to be said in its favour, and that he who undertakes to deny its correctness has his position to make good. In which case, we submit, we have arrived at a conclusion which may well be pleasing to all. We need not set forth how wholly inconsistent it is with the principles of true science, to seek in anything for a mere partisan triumph. Nor need we point out that such a purpose is even more inconsistent—if that be a possible thing—on the part

of those, who, as humble believers in the Gospel of Christ, desire to take Him as their example as well as their hope, and are daily endeavouring to rest with unspeakable thankfulness, on the promised help of His Spirit. We may all be content, therefore, we submit, with the conclusion arrived at, from whichever side we approach it; whether from that of Revelation, or that of observation; whether as believers in Scripture, or as admirers of Science. Such a conclusion is a defeat to neither side. It is an advantage to both. It is an advantage to both, because it helps to free both from distraction in the prosecution of truth. The prosecution of truth in any direction, requires all the concentration of mind we can give it. All who love truth, therefore, will value deliverance from distraction, as well for truth's sake as its own. And all who love either, will be glad of these present evidences that there is nothing in this case on either side to prevent any inquirers from giving all their powers to their task.



THE PSALMS
COMPARED WITH
HYMNS OF DIFFERENT RELIGIONS
AN
EVIDENCE OF INSPIRATION
BY THE
REV. W. G. BLAIKIE, D.D., LL.D.

Argument of the Tract.

THE object of this Tract is to show from the remarkable structure and spirit of the Psalms, that they must be viewed as the fruit of supernatural Divine inspiration. For this purpose, an exposition is given of their more striking qualities, and next, a comparison is instituted between the Psalms and the so-called sacred songs of other religions. It is seen that while the sense of sin and misery which the Psalms express is singularly profound, yet under the influence of the view of God, which they present, the sinner is enabled to rise to the heights of joy and peace, and to experience a glorious satisfaction and delight in God. God is not viewed merely as the God of creation and providence, but emphatically as the God of redemption. And when He is thus apprehended as the God of redemption, a charming light is thrown on His works of creation and providence, which become, in their turn, delightful revelations of His love and goodness. The Messianic element in the Psalms is another characteristic feature, which, besides the beautiful songs it contributes to the praise of the Heavenly King and glorious Deliverer, explains the tone of the whole collection, and accounts for the near and delightful relation to God in which it places man. In the second part of the Tract, a comparison is instituted between the Psalms and other songs, including those of the Brahminical, the Persian or Zoroastrian, and the Assyrian and other religions; and while due value is given to some interesting and even striking qualities in them, the result of the comparison is to establish the towering pre-eminence of the Psalms alike in the substance of what they teach, and in the tone and spirit by which they are pervaded.

THE PSALMS

COMPARED WITH

THE HYMNS OF DIFFERENT RELIGIONS

AN EVIDENCE OF INSPIRATION.



THE Book of Psalms has been called "The Bible of the Bible," because all that is most characteristic of the book is gathered there,—the concentrated essence,

as it were, of the whole. This certainly has been the general feeling of believing men in all ages and in all quarters of the globe. They have always felt that there was a very special cordial for their hearts in the Psalms. There they have found their best medicine for spiritual depression, vexing cares, and other burdens too heavy for human strength. The Psalms have proved a Jacob's ladder, on which the angels of God have ascended and descended. Many, like the late Mr. John Bright,¹ would be willing that the divine origin of the whole Bible should be staked upon

The
Psalms the
essence
of Old
Testament.

Claims of
whole Bible
may be
staked on
them.

¹ See Mr. Gladstone's Paper on the Psalms, *Good Words*, July, 1890.

The
Psalter
above all
similar
books.

the Psalter. If the Psalter weighed in the balances should be found wanting, what chance would there be for other parts of the Book? On the other hand, if the Psalter should be found to differ essentially from all other compositions of a similar kind; if nothing should be found in the sacred books of other religions bringing God and man into such close and blessed fellowship; if it should be seen that the outbreathings in the Psalms of filial trust, of tender contrition and triumphant faith, of childlike peace and holy joy, can be accounted for by no other conceivable cause, we shall have gained an important position in the battle of evidence, and established a great claim on behalf of the whole Book of which the Psalter is an integral part.

Twofold
object of
this Tract.

In this Tract we shall endeavour, in the first place, to bring out some of the most important and characteristic features of the Book of Psalms; and then to inquire whether the Psalter has any rival in other religions: whether any songs of similar character are found in any of their sacred books; and if there are, whether they are of the same order, and whether their tendency is to bring men's hearts into a similar fellowship with God.

I.

THE ANALYSIS.

THE great subject of the Psalter is, MAN dealing with God. In other books, the main subject is, God dealing with man; the Psalms abound, too, in such divine dealings, but these are in response to man's appeals to God, which may therefore be called the main subject. The child deals with his Father; the finite with the infinite; the creature of earth with the Lord of heaven. Surely it is one of the greatest of subjects, and of the most pathetic; what business can come for importance within sight of man's business with God? what look can have a tithe the pathos of man's, as he watches, in view of eternity, whether smile or frown falls on him from the Almighty?

Man's relation to God main subject of the Psalter.

Now, it is one of the greatest charms of the Psalms that they give a happy solution of the problem of man's relation to God. At least, they end with this. Often at the beginning things look very black. The cry at first is often *de profundis*—out of the depths. The poor weak child is in a woe-begone condition. Everything is dark, everything is threatening, the heart has sunk to zero. But usually the Psalms indicate a path from darkness to light, from the depths to the gates of

Happy solution of problem

From
darkness
to light.

heaven. Beginning with a wail, they often end with a hallelujah. It is an experience which we all like to hear of, and still more to enjoy. It cheers us to know that such a change is possible; it is pleasant to see a fellow creature's mourning turned into dancing, and the spirit of heaviness exchanged for the garments of praise. Apart altogether from matters of religion, this is a grateful sight in a world where there is so much distress on every side. Still more grateful is it if we ourselves, in our times of fear and dejection, are enabled to share the experience. And it is one of the rare virtues of the Psalms that where there is a congenial spirit, they impart the blessing they describe; placing ourselves beside the Psalmist we are borne upwards in his company; the clouds disperse, the sun shines out brightly, and the sigh of distress passes into the exclamation of relief and joy.

The
Psalms
help us
upward.

Song
generally
has an
uplifting
effect.

Song, according to a Hindu proverb, is the offspring of suffering, and in some sense an antidote to it. The burdened spirit seeks on the wings of music and poetry to escape into a brighter and serener region, and to some extent it succeeds. The mere fact, therefore, that the Psalms have a tendency to cheer and brighten the depressed soul would be no decisive evidence of their supernatural inspiration. If they only acted on disturbed feelings as the harp of David on the nerves

of Saul, no special claim could be made for them. Even if their soothing and brightening influence were far greater in degree than that of all other songs or hymns, we should not be able to construct an apologetic on their behalf.

Our contention is, that the tone of the Psalms is different in kind as well as in degree from that of all other compositions of the class. This appears especially in two things. First, the Psalms find the root of all man's trouble and misery much deeper down than other poems. It is found in sin, in a heart alienated from God, rebelling against His will, and with tastes out of all harmony with His law. This is a serious discovery; the disease is not functional merely, it is organic and malignant, seeming to defy every remedy under man's control. It is not the soft breath of music or song, however exquisite, that can deal with this; men in this trouble will not listen to the voice of the charmer, charm he never so wisely.

But the Psalms different from other songs.

They go deeper for root of our troubles.

Nevertheless it is out of this desperate slough of despond that men are lifted in the Psalms. And they are seen to be lifted out of it by being brought into a new relation to God, by consciously receiving His forgiveness, by throwing themselves on His grace and mercy, and coming under all the healing, purifying, and elevating influences of His Spirit. It is as developments or accompaniments of this Divine process that the Psalms are so remarkable.

They indicate a new relation to God.

It is as songs of the new creation, songs of the morning stars, shouts of new-born sons of God, that they have their pre-eminent glory. They are vitally connected with a process which no human hand ever yet effected, which no human mind ever conceived; a process which is seen to be of Divine origin because the tokens of a Divine birth reveal themselves in the life and character.

For that very God from whom the men once shrank in terror is now the joy and rejoicing of their heart. Who but God Himself ever taught a sinner to sing, "As the hart panteth after the waterbrooks so panteth my soul after Thee?" Whence but from heaven did the influence come that lifted up the beggar from the moral dunghill, and set him among princes, that he might inherit the throne of glory? And who but God, raising the sufferer from "the horrible pit and the miry clay," and setting his feet on a rock, could have taught him that new song, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless His holy name."

This
a Divine
effect.

Ps. 42. 1;
113. 7, 8;
40. 2; 103. 1.

The stability
of the
change.

It is not without good reason that the sense of stability and safety which man attains by this process is denoted by this figure, "set my feet upon a rock." For whatever other changes he may be exposed to, he never feels that the rock is insecure. He has no desire to try anything else. It is true indeed, for it is written on the

very surface of the Psalms, that even after he has once got rest, he may become disquieted anew, and be thrown again into a panting attitude. But this is not because he has found his refuge insufficient or untrustworthy. It is because the refuge is a Person, because the sense of joy and peace can be had only in fellowship with that Person, and because the poor weak soul, sensitive as the aspen leaf to the passing wind, is liable to be carried out of sight of its Refuge, and wander in darkness and trouble.

But at these times it is not a new refuge it seeks, its whole desire is to return to the old. And one of the most characteristic features of the Psalms is their following the spirit in these wanderings, showing its restlessness as long as they last, and then its infinite contentment and joy when it is able to say, "Return unto thy rest, O my soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee." The Divinity of the Refuge is all the more clearly manifested by this repeated experience of its blessedness.

Excellence
of the
refuge never
doubted.

Ps. 116. 7.

Surely it is a great problem that is solved when the restless heart of man finds rest in God, and after every new experience of restlessness comes back to the same Ark for rest and peace. Surely man was not designed to be the sport of endless trouble and feverish anxiety and disappointment; it must have been meant that he should have a

Problem
of man's
restlessness
solved.

calm haven somewhere to resort to for rest and peace. Are not the songs of the Psalms in praise of this haven? Their picture of human life is sufficiently dark: "He commandeth, and raiseth the stormy wind, which lifteth up the waves thereof. They mount up to the heaven, they go down again to the depths; their soul is melted because of trouble. They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wits' end." A sad situation to be left in, without sun or star or help from any quarter! But not a situation in which any man is ever left who knows the God of the Psalms. "Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble and He bringeth them out of their distress. He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still. Then are they glad because they be quiet, so He bringeth them to the desired haven."

Ps. 107. 25-30.

Man's entrance into tranquillity the burden of the Psalms.

Now if the burden of the Psalms be this marvellous entrance of the soul into Divine tranquillity; if the examples which they set before us are those of men who have found this peace by coming to God, and resting in His grace; if the very Being before whom they naturally trembled has become their Friend, and their sweetest enjoyment now comes to them from the very sources of their former misery, is there not a strong presumption that the book itself emanates from the living God, the God of Peace?

Presumption here that they are from God.

To come more to particulars ; we have said that the great burden of the Psalms is man dealing with God ; and any elucidation of their contents must gather round these two beings respectively. But it is not necessary to make a formal division between them.

What is man's attitude to God in the Psalms ? When he first raises his voice to God—what is the burden of his cry ? We do not need to listen long to discover that it is

Man's
attitude
to God in
the Psalms

THE CRY OF NEED.

Man is in trouble, and sin is the first and chief cause of his trouble ; and the most thrilling voice we hear as we listen is the cry of the sinner : “ Have mercy upon me, O Lord, according to Thy loving-kindness ; ” “ for Thy name's sake pardon mine iniquity, for it is great.”

Sin the
origin of
man's
distress.

Ps. 51. 1 ;
25. 11.

Very few of the Psalms are songs for angels. The Psalms are not the hymns of the ninety and nine, but of the prodigal, the leper, the lost. However heavenly in their spirit and tone they are quite human in their foundation. We see the moral and spiritual leper standing apart, and hear his plaintive moan, “ Unclean, unclean ! ” The voice rises from the depths, “ If Thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand ? ” It is something to know that this book

Psalms not
songs of the
angels.

Ps. 130. 3.

is a book for our very selves, for us who are down in the depths, banished, helpless, forlorn !

THE CRY FOR FORGIVENESS.

The
cry of
guilt not
the cry of
despair.

But with all the sense of guilt and unworthiness, the cry of the Psalms is never the cry of despair. It is always mingled with hope, and the hope rises surely to confidence and triumph. Even when the cry comes from the lowest depths, we find the psalmist resting his soul on the truth, "There is forgiveness with Thee, that Thou mayest be feared;" "and with Him is plenteous redemption." The God of the Psalms is a God of grace, a God of forgiveness and salvation. The gloomiest of all the Psalms is the 88th—a wail throughout. It ends, "lover and friend hast Thou put far from me, and mine acquaintance into darkness." Some excellent commentators (Dean Perowne, for example) have set this Psalm down as an exception to the rule, an exception to the usual character of the Psalms. But do not the first words of it, "*O Lord God of my salvation,*" show a different spirit? Underlying the whole is the truth that God is the God of salvation. The psalmist wonders why his experience of such a God is so different from what might have been looked for. He is by no means in despair, but, like Job, amazed and perplexed that a loving Father should so hide His face from him. He is

Ps. 130. 4, 7.

Apparent
but not real,
exception.

The
gloomiest
of the
Psalms.

using that privilege of genuine love—putting the worst aspect of things forward, almost exaggerating his misery, as a silent appeal to his Father on behalf of the son whom he knows that He loves. Read in this light, the light of its first words, the Psalm has quite a different complexion ; it is, after all, an appeal to a loving God, who cannot fail to be touched, the psalmist knows, at this recital of the sufferings of his child.

Let us glance at another of what are called the penitential Psalms, which has not the peculiarity of structure we find in the 88th. The first words of the 32nd Psalm are the keynote and index of the whole : “Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity.” The emphatic threefold repetition shows how completely the man has got rid of the guilt of his sin. It is forgiven, covered, not imputed to him. And what a happy condition it is ! How glorious, instead of trembling at the name of God, and running to hide from Him among the trees of the garden, to be able to welcome Him as Friend and Father, all whose resources of love and goodness are available for His child ! Where in Greek lyric or in Roman ode, in Hindu Veda or Mahometan Koran, shall we find such a song ? We shall come to deal more fully with this comparison afterwards ; but we may safely say here, that whatever may have filled

The
joy of
forgiveness.

This
peculiar to
the Psalms

Joy of
forgiveness
unknown to
paganism.

pagan worshippers with mirth, bursting out in song and dance, it was not the sense of forgiven sin. Whatever other conceptions of God they may have attained to under other religions, they certainly did not attain to that which is so prominent in the Psalms—the conviction that “the Lord God is merciful and gracious, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin.” Nor was this wonderful; for when the gods themselves were often guilty, sin could not be counted a very serious evil. If, after all, conscience spoke out and lashed the criminal, he had to bear the lash as best he might; for his creed had no doctrine like the Psalms of free and full forgiveness.

Features
of 103rd
Psalm.

Glance at another Psalm of similar tenor, but more exulting, one of the most remarkable in the whole collection—the 103rd. The effort of praise to which the psalmist summons his soul is so high that it cannot be reached in ordinary moods; all that is within him must be mustered and combined for the act of adoring gratitude to be rendered to God. When he begins to enumerate the divine acts for which He is thus to be praised, the first is—“who forgiveth all our iniquities.” It is first on the list because it dominates all. Indeed, if sin remained unforgiven, and its retribution still hung over the sinner, it would be but mockery to call on all that is within him to bless the Lord. It is God’s graciousness in forgiving

First
subject of
thanks-
giving.

that makes all His other acts so lovely. The psalmist expands the thought in admiring gratitude: "As the heaven is high above the earth, so great is His mercy toward them that fear Him." "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us." A new character, truly, for God—"the remover of our transgressions from us!" The ever-anxious effort of man is to remove his transgressions from God, to cover himself with any covering he can find or devise. The Psalm actually transfers the function to God. It is His function to bury our sins, to cast them into the depths, to remove them from us to an infinite distance. Surely, if God performs this function, we have nothing to fear. How different this burial of sin by the Lord, beyond the possibility of resurrection, and man's attempt to bury it, through pagan devices, or any other means whatever! There is a boldness as well as a graciousness in the conception of God Himself removing our sin, which is far above the human level; only God could draw such a picture of Himself.

How sin is
disposed of
by God.

Contrast to
paganism.

THE CRY FOR DELIVERANCE FROM TROUBLE.

There are other cries of need in the Psalms besides the cry for pardon. Conspicuous among these is the cry for deliverance from trouble, and

The
psalmist in
trouble.

His cry not
despairing.

Ps. 13. 1, 2.

Trouble got
rid of.

Ps. 46. 2, 3.

This not
a mere
imagination

especially from the cruel attempts and crafty devices of enemies. In reference to these cries likewise we remark that the writer never despairs. Deliverance always looms in the distance, yet his distress for the time being is often very intense. Although he is sure that God will come to him eventually, there is no sign of God's having come when he begins his Psalm. "How long wilt Thou forget me, O Lord, for ever? how long wilt Thou hide Thy face from me? How long shall I take counsel in my soul, having sorrow in my heart daily? How long shall mine enemy be exalted over me?" By and by, he gets rid of his discomfort. The eye of faith discerns the outstretched arm of God, and sometimes the sense of coming relief is quite exultant: "We will not fear, though the earth be removed, though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof."

Can anyone doubt that this was a real experience? Is not the first stage of it very true to human nature—that of agitation, restlessness, impatience? Why then should we doubt that the other stage is just as real? People do not commonly get rid of trouble by a trick of fancy. Quite the other way. Fancy magnifies trouble, it does not abolish it. Does not black care stick

to most men like grim death, defying all their efforts by day and by night to shake it off? The deliverance real.
Now, it is a simple fact that through faith in an unseen God the psalmist could get rid of trouble, and so real was this experience that he could sleep peacefully in the midst of what otherwise would have robbed him of all repose. His cry to God had so often been answered in the past that he felt sure it would be answered again. God had shown Himself his God in so many times of need, that he had only to turn to Him for relief when trouble was near. Ps. 18. 6. "In my distress I called upon the Lord, and cried unto my God; He heard my voice out of His temple, and my cry came before Him, even into His ears." How much of the bitterness and pain of life would be avoided if all men knew the same solace and refuge in their times of need!

THE CRY FOR HOLINESS.

There is in the Psalms yet another great cry of need—the cry for a heart conformed to God's will, for a life ordered in His ways, for the cleansing of the soul from the dominion of sin, for the grace that leads in the way everlasting. So far from this cry being weakened by the sense of forgiven sin, it is only intensified by it. No man ever felt more keenly what a degrading thing sin in the heart is, than he who thanked God for having for- Conformity of heart to God's will desired.

Sense of
pardon
quicken
desire for
holiness.

Ps. 51. 10;
139. 23, 24;
119. 5, 6.

given him all his iniquities. It is a curse in his eyes to have even the remains of a disposition that resists the will of God, that loses touch with his Heavenly guide leading him on in the way everlasting, and wanders into some wretched by-path, to gratify a miserable lust whose voice should never have been suffered to be heard. Can anyone doubt the sincerity of cries like these: "Create within me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me." "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." "O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes! Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all Thy commandments."

This cry
also a cry
of hope.

And in reference to this cry, also, as to the rest, we observe that it is never the cry of despair. Underlying it is always the conviction that what is sought will come. Even in the dreadful depth of the 51st Psalm this anchor of hope holds firm. The psalmist has been plunged in the ditch so that even his own clothes abhor him. Yet, when he cries, "Purge me with hyssop," he can add, "and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than the snow." Whiter than the snow! Can it be? Caught red-handed, stained with adultery, polluted with murder, degraded by perfidy, his grey hairs dishonoured, his crown disgraced, him-

self become for all ages a proverb and a bye-word, he is still confident that, by God's cleansing power, he shall be whiter than the snow!

It is this supreme hopefulness that is so much to be admired in the Psalms, and that makes them so different from all the utterances of pagan feeling. The psalmist feels that he has to do with a living personal God who is interested in him, and who has promised, as his covenant God, to undertake for him and to supply all his needs. It is this relation of God to him, and interest in him, that assures him of victory. The divine power has come into contact with him, and it more than makes up for all his weakness. God and he are one, and will be one for ever. Surely the greatest problem of human life is solved when the way has thus been found of linking the feebleness of man to the strength of the almighty and ever-living God.

For God's strength is made to work in him.

THE ENJOYMENT OF GOD IN THE PSALMS.

God is something more in the Psalms than a lord and ruler, more than even a reconciled ruler, who has forgiven all the sins of His subject. He has not ceased to be a great King, but He has become a most intimate and attached friend. And in many of the most beautiful and characteristic Psalms, we find the heart flowing out to Him as

heart flows out to God.

Combina-
tion of
reverence
and love.

Ps. 104. 1;
23. 1.

The
service of
God
a willing
tribute.

This
exemplified
in 23rd
Psalm.

such. The incense of reverence, affection, obedience, trust, rises to Him in a mingled current. He is not revered less because He is loved, nor loved less because He is revered. As the child may hold his father in the highest respect yet be as much at ease and as intimate with him as with any of his playmates, so the psalmist may say at once, "O Lord, Thou art very great, Thou art clothed with honour and with majesty," and, "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want." It is no ordinary achievement to reach this sense of one's relation to God. It quite changes the character of religious service. Instead of a constrained homage, like that of a vassal to a superior, it becomes a willing and hearty tribute. And this loving relation to God brings influences to play on the worshipper that purify and beautify his character. It is as bringing out this happy relation to God that the Psalms have such a unique character, unapproached in the songs of any other religious system. Where else do you find the worshipper thirsting for God as the hart panteth for the brooks of water?

Let us observe how this fellowship with God is delineated in some of the Psalms. One of the most general favourites in the collection is the 23rd. It is marked by a childlike simplicity and confidence, giving birth to perfect peace and happiness. It shows us the psalmist regaling

himself with God's friendship, delighting himself in His rich and manifold goodness. For there is nothing of which he is more assured than that God is rich to overflowing in all manner of kind, generous, thoughtful love. Let the ills and troubles of life be what they may, they vanish at the thought of the Divine Shepherd's care. Since God is pouring the covenant blessings on him, all his wants will be supplied, all dangers averted, all evil turned to good, and life to its furthest bounds will become an unbroken experience of goodness and mercy.

Thorough
confidence
in God.

It is generally admitted that this Psalm came from David's pen, though the belief that it was written in his early youth may not at first sight seem to agree with some expressions in it, as, for example, the reference to the presence of his enemies.

A Psalm of
David.

DAVID AS PSALMIST.

Some persons are disposed to wonder why a man who had sinned like David should have had the most conspicuous place as a writer of psalms. One should hardly have expected a man in whom there were such deep stains of character to be so specially honoured of God. But David was by grace specially fitted for fellowship with God, his heart was very much drawn to Him, his feelings

Why David
so eminent
a Psalm
writer.

His close
personal
relation to
God.

flowed out in a strong current towards Him. He was endowed with that power of being at his ease with God which sometimes one child of a family has with his father, and the others want. More vividly than perhaps any man before or since, he felt the favour of God to be the essence of blessedness, and His frown the essence of misery. We see this very markedly in his great penitential Psalm, the 51st; for all the laboured efforts of critics cannot convince us that this was not David's: "Cast me not away from Thy presence, and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me"—there you see David's hell. "Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation, and uphold me with Thy free Spirit"—there you have David's heaven. And this view of God's smile and God's frown is the vital element of the religion of the Psalms.

His hell
and his
heaven.

It is strange that men have been so slow to appreciate the remarkable truth that, apart from the One spotless Example, the men whom God has employed to show us the way to heaven have been poor, struggling, sin-stained creatures like ourselves. It shows little appreciation of a blessed Divine arrangement to be always harping on their faults.

"Faults!" exclaims Carlyle, in his *Lectures on Heroes*, "The greatest of faults, I should say, is to be conscious of none. Readers of the Bible, above all, one would think, might know better. Who is called there 'the man after God's own heart?' David, the Hebrew king, has fallen into sins enough, blackest

crimes, there was no want of sins. And thereupon the unbelievers sneer and ask, Is this your man according to God's heart? The sneer, I must say, seems to me but a shallow one. What are faults, what are the outward details of a life, if the inner secret of it, the remorse, temptations, true often-baffled never-ended struggle of it, be forgotten? 'It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.' Of all acts, is not for a man *repentance* the most sublime? The deadliest sin, I say, were that same supercilious consciousness of no-sin;—that is death; the heart so conscious is divorced from sincerity, humility, and fact; is dead; it is 'pure' as dead sand is pure. David's life and history, as written for us in these Psalms of his, I consider to be the truest emblem ever given of a man's moral progress and warfare here below. All earnest souls will ever discern in it the faithful struggle of an earnest human soul towards what is good and best. Struggle often baffled, sore baffled, down as into entire wreck, yet a struggle never ended; even with true repentance, true unconquerable purpose, begun anew. Poor human nature! Is not a man's walking in truth always that,—a succession of falls? Man can do no other. In this wild element of a Life he has to struggle onwards; now fallen, deep abased, and even with tears, repentance, with bleeding heart, he has to rise again, struggle again still onwards. That his struggle be a faithful unconquerable one, that is the question of questions. We will put up with many sad details of the soul if it be true. Details by themselves will never teach us what it is."

Carlyle on
David.

David was no doubt the foremost of the writers of the Psalms, and his marked individualism puts a stamp on the whole book. But probably two thirds were written by other authors. There are many varieties of character and experience represented in them, but the prevailing common feature of them all is that they are the cries of needy hearts appealing to God for what God only can give; and pouring out to Him their gratitude and joy for blessings that are never asked in vain.

IS THE RELIGION OF THE PSALMS HEALTHY?

Religion of
Psalms
not mere
feeling.

Relation of
feeling to
action.

Ps. 25. 4;
143. 10;
139. 23.

The use of
David's
falls.

Will it be said that a religion which has to do so much with feeling, with the luxury of spiritual enjoyment, cannot be a healthy religion? Will it be suspected of some affinity to that form of fanaticism which separates religion from common life, as if a man might be an excellent Christian man, though guilty of great irregularities? Certainly it cannot be said that the religion of the Psalms is of this sort. It is impossible for real fellowship with God to leave a man's conscience untouched, to leave him indifferent to pleasing God in any action of his life. So long as the psalmist held heart-to-heart intercourse with God, his cry was, "Show me Thy ways, O Lord, teach me Thy paths," "Teach me to do Thy will, for Thou art my God," "Search me, O God, and see if there be any wicked way in me." It was when his religion became merely formal, when he ceased to look God in the face and commune with Him as His son, that lust gathered strength, and led him so far astray. And it was by his falls on these occasions that he came to see what he was, and that his cries for mercy and help became so pathetic and so eager. Is it a fault that the Psalter constantly recognises an element of sin even in the best men, as liable to assert itself, and plunge them

in the ditch? Is it a drawback that its cries are the cries of poor, tempted, struggling, human creatures, who feel themselves at the mercy of forces they cannot control, and cry to their Father to help them? Would not the book be infinitely less valuable if it were a uniform record of serene angelic experiences, untroubled by any intrusion of temptation and wickedness? Surely it is the last objection that we should hear to the Psalms that they are not the utterances of men ideally perfect, but of men like ourselves, shapen in iniquity and conceived in sin.

The Psalms recognise our proneness to fall.

And always in the Psalms SIN is seen as the great cause of separation from God, the malign influence that kills enjoyment, disturbs happy intercourse, eclipses the sun, brings misery and desolation. How one who feels this should be so much under its influence, is the very mystery of one's being. But the consciousness that it is so lends pathos to such pleadings as those of the 119th Psalm, where the contest between the sense of bondage and the desire for deliverance assumes its intensest form. "My soul cleaveth to the dust; quicken Thou me according to Thy word." "Trouble and anguish have taken hold of me; yet Thy commandments are my delights." "I have gone astray like a lost sheep; seek Thy servant, for I do not forget Thy commandments"

The curse of sin seen in the Psalms.

This quickens the prayer for deliverance.

ELEMENT OF JOY IN THE PSALMS.

The
Psalms full
of joyous
feeling.

Ps. 32. 11;
40. 16.

Hebrew
religion not
joyless.

The
call to a
joyful
service.

Ps. 95. 1.

It is quite in accordance with this view that joy should be so conspicuous an element of the religion of the Psalms. "Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, ye righteous, and shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart." "Let all those that seek Thee, rejoice and be glad in Thee; let such as love Thy salvation say continually, The Lord be magnified." It is hardly realized how much of this joyful element there was in the highest forms of Hebrew religion. We are prone to think of it as a stiff, formal, pharisaic religion. But to the devout Hebrew there often came that sense of delight that could not but overflow into channels of song; and as if his own voice could not utter it adequately, he calls for psaltery and harp, timbrel and cymbal, trumpet and organ, to lend their voices and swell the great hallelujah.

Do we adequately observe this as we repeat or sing certain of the Psalms? Do we thoroughly enter into the expression, "Let us make a *joyful* noise to the rock of our salvation?" Or take the 100th Psalm, a Psalm so full of memorable associations. It is not a call to "all people that on earth do dwell" merely to serve God. It is a call to serve Him *with gladness*, to make a *joyful* noise to Him, to come before His presence with

singing, to enter His gates with thanksgiving. No cold heart can fulfil this summons. No heart can fulfil it in which at the time a sense of God's infinite goodness is not the predominant feeling.

THE BRIGHTNESS OF THE PSALMS.

Let us observe that the key-note of a large part of the Psalms is a joy which is the outcome of that relation to God which lies at the foundation of the spiritual experience which they describe. Is this spiritual experience not brightness? Brightness in the highest region, in the very region that governs every other; because brightness there diffuses itself over all the scenes and interests of life, and like the rays of the sun, glorifies the dullest things. Must it not be from God that the conception of this as the true outcome of religious service has come, as well as the power to realize it both in the writers of the Psalms, and in all who enter into their spirit? The soul's deepest cravings are fulfilled. Its hunger is appeased—it is SATISFIED. In what other religion shall we find anything of the kind? Where else does the heart give evidence of having even begun to experience the repose of complete satisfaction, of having come in sight of the chief good, or so much as tasted its sweetness? In the Psalms, if the summit of blessedness is not reached, we know

Joy the outcome of a right relation to God.

This peculiar to the religion of the Bible.

Satisfaction found in God.

Ps. 73. 25,
26.

where to find it. Even now it is no trifling elevation that he has reached who can say, "Whom have I in heaven but Thee, and there is none on earth I desire besides Thee. My heart and my flesh faileth, but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever." Men are not left to sigh out, "Oh that I knew where I might find Him?" This, as we shall see, is the cry of the best men in other religions. In the Psalms God is near, and they that know His name put their trust in Him.

THE VOICE OF NATURE IN THE PSALMS.

The
Psalms help
us to find
God in
nature.

Even in the Psalms, God speaks in diverse manners. We know that God's voice is often uttered in nature, and His form is often revealed; but the voice is not heard by common ears, the form is not discerned by common eyes. But the Psalms help us to hear that voice and to discover that form. It would not be correct to say that in the Psalms the path is simply "from nature up to nature's God." It was not by giving special heed to nature that devout Hebrews arrived at so much more just conceptions of God than others, and so much nearer and more delightful intercourse with Him. The God of nature had already become known to them as the God of redemption. It was when having known Him in this capacity they

The God
of nature
known first
as God of
redemption.

looked round on nature, that it became interesting and attractive to them, because they found it uttering the message of their Father, they found it telling of Him whom they delighted to honour. So it is still with devout students of the Psalms.

They give a new meaning to nature. If what they echo be the roar of the thunder or the crash of the storm, it is the symbol of that Almighty power which is ever allied to righteousness and love. If it be the soft whisper of the dawn or the sunset, it is the token of the gracious tenderness which watches His people as the apple of His eye. If it be the silent but eloquent voice of sun, moon, and stars, it tells of that orderly rule that turned chaos into order, and that will one day complete the same process in the moral world. Thus it is that in the Psalms God's works praise Him, while His saints bless Him, not as the mere God of nature, but the God of redemption too.

The
voices of
nature
explained.

REDEMPTION BEFORE NATURE.

One of the Psalms in which it is seen most clearly that it is in the light of God's grace that His works in nature are seen to best advantage, is the 65th. The Psalm begins with grace and ends with nature. It is the song of a sinner—"iniquities prevail against me," but of a sinner confident of forgiveness and cleansing—"as for our trans-

The 65th
Psalm.

Begins with
grace and
ends with
nature.

Confidence
thus felt
in God as
Lord of
creation and
providence.

gressions, Thou shalt purge them away." It is the song of one who knows that he would never have come to God if God had not graciously drawn him; he feels the joy of those whom God chooses, and dwells with much comfort on the satisfaction of heart which they find in Him. From this starting-point, he goes on to express confidence and delight in God as the God of creation and of providence. If enemies have to be held in check, He has mighty forces to overawe them. The vast mountain masses are symbols of the strength with which he is girded, and by which he can at once overbear his enemies though they dwell in the utmost parts, and become the confidence of them that are afar off upon the sea. This is the lesson from whatever in nature is grand and awe-inspiring.

Tender
aspects of
nature.

But the more tender aspects of nature are richer in comforting lessons. Nothing can exceed in quiet beauty and suggestiveness the reference to the beauties of dawn and sunset—"Thou makest the outgoings of the morning and of the evening to rejoice." The psalmist had an eye for the silvery brightness of the morning, stealing across the hills of Gilead, sparkling over the Jordan and the Sea of Galilee, and stringing pearls and diamonds on every bush and tree from Dan even to Beersheba. Not less did he love the golden sunset, turning the Great Sea into a mass of

Dawn and
sunset.

trembling glory, gilding the far-off peaks of Hermon and Lebanon, and distilling something of heavenly calm on "Jerusalem the Golden." Whence came these bright but short-lived glories, these joyful outgoings of the morning and the evening? They were from God, symbols of that exuberance of joy which marks the divine nature, tokens of that fondness which He has for all that expresses gladness, and of His desire that man's days should begin with joy and end with joy—a desire not often realized outwardly, but realized in an inward and deeper sense wherever the Sun of Righteousness shines with healing in His wings.

*Their
meaning*

But this glance at dawn and sunset is but a passing touch. The poet goes on to describe the operations of God in real life, in the business of seed-time and harvest. The hand of the Divine husbandman is conspicuous at every point. There, with the showers of spring, He is watering the earth and moistening the furrow; yonder He is summoning the myriad of light-green leaves that tell of living plants and a successful spring time; again He is remembering the necessities of the pasture and making the little hills rejoice on every side. And when the little hills rejoice, there is plenty for the cattle, and so the pastures are clothed with flocks, the valleys also are covered over with corn; they shout for joy, they also sing.

*Seed-time
and harvest*

*God's
operation
in spring.*

*Joyous
aspects of
nature.*

The poet, as in other Psalms, is especially impressed with the joyous aspects of nature, and through them He carries our thoughts to the joyous nature of God, and the glorious outflow of this feeling, wherever it is not checked by the sin and obstinacy of man.

Psalms
103 and 104
related.

We find the same lesson taught on a larger scale in two of the most striking Psalms of the collection—the 103rd and the 104th. They are hymns of similar purpose, and in some respects of similar structure. They begin and end alike with, “Bless the Lord, O my soul.” But the first (as we have already seen) is a hymn of redemption, the other a hymn of nature. The song of redemption comes first, to that God “who forgiveth all our iniquities, who healeth all our diseases ;” who “hath not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities ; but as far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us.” The soul is first feasted with this aspect of God’s character. This is the chord that sets all else vibrating, that makes “all that is within me” quiver. It is through this path of forgiveness and redemption we are brought nigh to God. Our souls magnify the Lord, and our spirits rejoice in God our Saviour. Then we delight to remember that “His kingdom ruleth over all.” We remember with joy that universal nature owns Him as Lord. We

Psalm 103
a Psalm of
redemption.

God a
forgiving
God.

His title to
universal
praise.

delight to see Him receiving the homage of all His creatures, and we call on the angels that excel in strength, on all His ministers that hearken to the voice of His word, and on all His works in all places of His dominion, to join with us in blessing the Lord (vv. 20-22).

Then comes the hymn of nature (Psalm 104). The first glimpse of sky and earth and sea gives the idea of infinite majesty. Divine attributes show themselves in heaven above and in the earth beneath. But of whom are they the attributes? "O Lord, my God, Thou art very great." The poet is not dealing with an unknown being, but with Him whom he already knows as the God of redemption. He is not personifying the living powers of nature, but finding in nature fresh proofs of the wonderful qualities of the God of grace. He sees much of God's glory in light, in the clouds, in the mighty waters; but it is not in these he has got his first sight of the glory of God. He has seen His glory in redemption, and the eye that has looked on redemption is keener and clearer far in looking on nature.

The 104th a
Psalm of
nature.

God's
attributes
symbolized
in nature.

Then the poet launches out into a description of the great objects of nature, first ideally, then realistically, entering sympathetically at every step into the plans and purposes of God. What a wonderful workman He is! what perfect machinery He contrives and executes! and how numberless are

Divine
workman-
ship
wonderful.

The one
drawback
to his
satisfaction.

the proofs of adaptation on every side! He ascribes to the Divine Workman that joy in His works of which every man knows something who succeeds in his undertakings—"the glory of the Lord shall endure for ever: the Lord shall rejoice in His works." His soul is remarkably stirred by the survey of all the results of divine wisdom and goodness: "I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live; I will sing praise unto the Lord while I have my being." One thing only vexes him:

"Where every prospect pleases,
And only man is vile."

Remedy
for this.

For removing this blot, he has, it is true, the suggestion, "Let the sinners be consumed out of the earth, and let sinners be no more," but he also rejoices that God is gracious and longsuffering. The psalmists were prophets charged with the business of denouncing God's judgments on incorrigible offenders.¹ If their tone seems at times severe, we must remember that Jesus had not yet appeared with His lesson of meekness and charity.

SOME PECULIAR ASPECTS OF NATURE.

The voice of nature in the Psalms is never at variance with what has now been dwelt on; but

¹ For a treatment of the so-called "Imprecatory Psalms" see Present Day Tract No. 56, *Moral Difficulties of the Old Testament Scriptures*, by the Rev. E. R. Conder, D.D., pp. 45-58.

other ideas are sometimes introduced and form the especial theme of particular Psalms.

Thus, in the 8th, which begins characteristically with the appropriating pronoun, "O Lord, *our* Lord," the great thought is that the wonders of creation give us a new sense of the goodness of God to man. "When I consider the heavens, the work of Thy hands, the moon and the stars which Thou hast ordained; then say I, What is man that Thou art mindful of him, and the son of man that Thou visitest him?" The 66th is of somewhat similar tenor: "Say unto God, How terrible art Thou in Thy works! Through the greatness of Thy power shall Thine enemies submit themselves unto Thee." The very terribleness of God is an encouragement to His friends, for it is on their behalf that He wields that might which is alike infinite and irresistible.

Psalms 66, 8,
shows from
nature
God's
goodness
to man.

In the 19th Psalm the sentiment is somewhat different. The object there is to exalt God as the author of a holy and majestic order alike in the natural and the moral world. The heavens are called as witnesses of the sublime order of God in nature, as they appear both by day and by night. The chief witness is the sun. At the dawn of day, he comes forth as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, rejoicing as a strong man to run a race. His mighty march is from one end of the heavens to the other, and his genial influence falls on all

Psalm 19
praises the
orderliness
of God.

The
sun the
chief
witness to
God's
orderliness
in nature.

The law has a similar place in moral world.

between. Powerful and beneficent as a monarch, he is at the same time regular and orderly as a machine. To promote a similar order in the moral world, God has given His law. Endowed with every divine quality, it is indeed fitted to bring extraordinary blessing to man. If only he would accept and honour it, the law would be in the moral world what the sun is in the natural. But man is a poor sinner, who has brought all manner of disorder into God's earth, and who has to appeal to God Himself to pity him, and to keep him back both from secret and from presumptuous sins. Only when he is renewed by grace will the correspondence be realized between the order of nature without and the order of the soul within.

The 29th or Psalm of the seven thunders.

The thunder-storm described.

Turning to the 29th Psalm, we find a thunder-storm brought into the service in order to excite reverence for Him who utters His voice in the thunder. We owe to Mr. McCheyne, if we are not mistaken, when on his Palestine tour, the conception of this Psalm, as a picture of a storm gathering first over the Mediterranean, then crashing against the cedars of Lebanon, dashing along the country till it shook the wilderness of Kadesh, terrifying the hinds and making them drop their calves, issuing flaming forks that sent their glare into the depths of the forest, while assembled worshippers, drawn by the awful spectacle to the temple at Jerusalem, could talk of nothing but the

glory of the Lord who sitteth upon the flood, who sitteth King for ever.

All this, in the Psalms, is the operation of the living God. It is "the voice of the Lord that is upon many waters." It is God Himself who sweeps along in the storm, and the devout heart sees in it a token of His dread majesty, and rouses itself to give to Him the glory due to His name. But its worship is not the worship of terror. It knows that the mighty arm raised in the thunder-storm is raised in its defence; and the Psalm concludes beautifully—"The Lord will give strength to His people; the Lord will bless His people with peace."

The
thunder
the voice
of God.

Yet God
gives peace
to his
people.

The theology of the Psalms gives us not only a personal but a present God, who is continually manifesting Himself in all the operations of nature; yet a God who loveth righteousness and hateth wickedness, and who knows and loves His children, while He is angry with the wicked every day.

And as God thus reveals and expresses Himself in nature, so nature is called on to proclaim His praise, to offer the tribute of her homage to her great Lord and King. "Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad; let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof; let the field be joyful, and all that is therein; then shall all the trees of the wood rejoice before the Lord." A still higher level is reached when the call to praise Him is

Nature
called to
honour
her Lord.

Ps. 96. 11, 12.

All
creatures
called to
join in the
chorus.

Ps. 148.

But pre-
eminently
man.

addressed to all creatures, animate and inanimate, angels and all the hosts of heaven ; to sun, moon and stars, fire and hail, snow and vapours, stormy wind fulfilling His word ; mountains and all hills, fruitful trees and all cedars ; beasts and all cattle, creeping things and flying fowls ; kings of the earth and all people, judges and all princes of the earth ; young men and maidens, old men and children. It is the same spirit that prevails and the same end that is sought, whether the wonders of creation are viewed as symbols of the power and glory of God, or the creatures and agencies of nature are summoned to join the great chorus of praise and adoration. In the case of the lower creatures, such calls are evidently mere poetical appeals, and can draw forth only a poetical response ; the great burden of duty lies on MAN, and especially man redeemed and renewed ; and the heart must indeed be dull and dead that under such appeals does not feel more deeply its duty and its privilege, and does not make the praise of God more emphatically and constantly its highest aim.

GLIMPSES OF MESSIAH IN THE PSALMS.

This
a very
remarkable
feature

We have left for consideration till now what is, perhaps, the most remarkable feature of the Psalms. It is certainly the most remarkable

feature of the Old Testament; and if the Psalms give us the essence of the Old Testament, it cannot but have an important place in them. From first to last, we have revelations more or less fragmentary, more or less definite, respecting One who was to visit earth in the name of the Lord, bringing with Him the choicest blessings of heaven. There is nothing resembling this in other so-called sacred books. It is the peculiar glory of the Hebrew Scriptures. Everywhere we get glimpses of an Advent to be, a manifestation of the Arm of the Lord; a Branch from the stem of Jesse; a Sun of Righteousness with healing in his wings; a Shepherd to feed his flock in the richest pastures; a Royal Priest, who would sit on a throne of righteousness, and bring with him peace and pardon and everlasting joy.

Peculiar
to our
Scriptures.

There is much of this sort in the Psalms, an undefined nebula of glory in connection with the advent of this heavenly Visitor. But there is more; there are specific predictions of His coming and His work. In these He is generally announced as a King. And this King has a terrible as well as a gracious aspect. In the 2nd Psalm, for example, we have His terrible appearance, terrible to His acknowledged foes. "Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron, thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." In the 72nd Psalm, we have Him

Specific
predictions
of coming of
Messiah.

Sometimes
an awful,
oftener a
gracious
coming.

2nd Psalm.

72nd Psalm.

45th Psalm.

Compared
with
Song of
Solomon.The
marriage
symbol.

presented in His most gracious and tender character:—"He shall deliver the needy when he crieth, the poor also, and him that hath no helper. He shall spare the poor and needy, and shall save the souls of the needy. He shall redeem their souls from deceit and violence, and precious shall their blood be in His sight." In the 45th Psalm, we have the two aspects combined. His "arrows stick fast in the heart of His enemies, whereby the people fall under Him." He "rides prosperously, because of truth and meekness and righteousness," upholding these interests wherever He goes. He is not like a common warrior, warring with confused noise and garments rolled in blood, but He conquers hearts, and draws them after Him as a bridegroom draws his bride. His great wish on earth is to rectify its disorders and establish purity and peace. In its structure the 45th Psalm resembles the Song of Songs, but it is a hymn of a higher order. In the Song of Songs the qualities of the bride and bridegroom are those of material beauty; but in the 45th Psalm, there are moral and spiritual qualities—"Thou lovest righteousness and hatest wickedness, therefore God, thy God hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." The fellowship of men with this glorious being is set forth under the image of bridal love, and as having

the same satisfying result: "Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thy kindred and thy father's house; so shall the King greatly desire thy beauty; for He is thy Lord, and worship thou Him." The poet's own heart glows under the picture. Again we ask, What have we in any other religion corresponding to this? Where else have we the combination of such apparently opposite ideas—the consuming fire and the loving bridegroom? Where such a conception of the gracious fellowship between God and man? The influence of this divine Being burns up sin, as stubble is burnt in the fire, yet draws the heart with an overwhelming affection, and changes the child of sin into the image of the Holy One.

Remarkable
combination
of opposite
ideas.

There are dark passages too in the Psalms that bear on Messiah, as there are in other parts of Scripture. We are taught in the New Testament to ascribe to Him some of the deepest moans of the Psalms. They may have been uttered by others first, but in their deepest significance they are His. We should puzzle ourselves in vain to explain all this in the light of the Old Testament alone. We learn from the New Testament that the blessing to be brought by Messiah could not come without an experience on His part of profound humiliation. But we learn also that since He passed with unsullied honour through all His trials, the blessings

Moans of
the Psalms
often
Messianic.

Necessity
of Messiah's
humiliation.

He came to procure are secured beyond the possibility of challenge, and the darkness through which He passed will but add to the glory to which He is marching on.

A TWOFOLD WITNESS TO JESUS CHRIST.

The predictive element in the Psalms points to Christ.

These predictions numerous and clear.

Persistency of this view.

In this Messianic element in the Psalms we have a twofold witness to Christ. In the first place there is the witness of prophecy, common to the Psalms with the rest of the prophetic scriptures, pointing as they did to a great deliverer who was to arise in the Hebrew nation hundreds of years after the predictions were delivered. No efforts of criticism or rationalism can really impair the force of this argument. Can it be denied that from the time of Abraham onwards the Jewish people did look forward to a great deliverer, who in some way or other was to do them a memorable service, and whose advent was to constitute a great era in their history? Can it be denied that hints and visions and more direct intimations of this deliverer stud their sacred books, and especially the Psalms? How did these arise? How were they so persisted in? Why did the hope not wear out through lapse of time? What led prophet after prophet and poet after poet to take up the same strain, and add something to the picture of his predecessors? And how came it that at the

very time when this Messiah was expected, there appeared in Jesus of Nazareth, the most remarkable man the world has ever known, one whom the ablest unbelievers have for ages and centuries been trying to make out as merely a man, but trying in vain? The mere coincidence is baffling to unbelief; but it is more than baffling when we find so many agreements between what was said of Him and what He actually was; when we find the apparent contradictions of the lion and the lamb reconciled; the apparent anomaly of His humiliation explained; the promised combination of teacher, priest, and ruler realized; the symbol of the bridal attachment between Him and His followers verified; in short, when we find the predictions of the Old Testament fulfilled in the person of Jesus to a degree which could not be approached were we to try to apply them to any one else. And what has thus been established has been confirmed in the deepest consciousness of thousands, in all conditions of human life, and in all ages of the Church's history, who have summed up their views of Christ in the apostle's words, "In whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins; who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature. . . . And He is the head of the body, the Church . . . for it pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell."

Predictions
fulfilled in
Christ.

Uniqueness
of Christ's
person.

Testimony
of souls to
Christ.

Col. 1. 24-29.

The
Messianic
glow of the
Psalms.

Like a
divine
presence

The
devout
heart finds
Christ in
the Psalms.

How he
has come is
sometimes
inexplicable.

The other way in which the Messianic element in the Psalms witnesses to Christ is by means of the tender, gracious light which it imparts, as if from some hidden fountain of light above. We do not expect opponents to accept this remark, but it is certain that believing men have apprehended a divine presence in the Psalms, as of the Angel of the Covenant, which has given them a remarkable charm. Some have thought the whole collection Christological, presenting under a veil the relations and inter-communings of Christ and His Church. But the most part of devout readers limit the Messianic portions within narrower bounds. Some liberty, we think, in the search for Messiah, must be allowed to the spiritual instincts of hearts devoted to the Lord, if they pay regard to the great principles of Scripture typology. For in the Psalms there is a wonderful spiritual light, howsoever it may enter. That it comes from Christ, can hardly be questioned by the devout heart. It is like the soft subdued light that in a summer evening penetrates the glades of a forest, creating a glory in its very depths. No sun can be seen through the thick leafy screen, and it would puzzle any one to trace the path, along which, reflected here and thrown forward there, the rays have found their way; yet there they are, and it is certain they have come from the sun. So in the Book of Psalms: it is penetrated by a glow

and a glory which are not of the earth ; by what path the glory has come, it may be hard for critics always to explain ; but the devout heart knows it is from the SUN of Righteousness, from Him who is evermore the light and the life of men.

II.

THE COMPARISON.

IN proceeding now to contrast the Psalms with similar compositions in other religions, we find a difficulty in most cases, arising from want of materials. In many of the ancient religions, and of the non-Christian religions of the present day, there is no such thing ; and in other cases, where there were or are hymns, they have not been preserved, or they do not exist in an available form. In dealing with the subject, we must give prominence to cases where suitable materials are to be found ; whatever may be the result of the contrast in such cases will probably hold good in all.

In many other religions there is little corresponding to our Psalms.

HYMNS OF THE RIG-VEDA.

It is in connection with Brahminism that we have the fullest collection of hymns. Of the various sacred books of the Hindus, by far the most important and interesting is the Rig-Veda, consisting of "those prayers, invocations, and

The Brahminical hymns or Vedas.

Their great
antiquity.

hymns which have been collected and handed down to us from a period after the Indian branch of the great Indo-European race had finally settled down in Northern India, but which were doubtless composed by a succession of poets at different times (perhaps between 1500 and 1000 years before Christ.)¹ Some assign to these hymns a still more ancient date. They have attracted much notice from inquirers into non-Christian faiths. Translations of some of them have been given by Celebrooke, Max Müller, Muir, Goldstücker, Sir Monier Williams, and others. We may therefore assume that the most notable of these hymns have been brought before English readers. Our space admits of but a selection of morsels out of the selections of some of these writers.

Polytheistic
yet mono-
theistic.

Three gods
regarded as
supreme.

The hymns of the Vedas are polytheistic, yet in a sense monotheistic. They are addressed to different divinities, prominent among whom are Indra, god of rain, Agni, god of fire, and Varuna, god of the sky; yet each is adored as supreme, as if somehow their individuality was swallowed up in a more comprehensive unity. Sometimes the unity of God seems expressly recognized, as in the hymn Rig-Veda x. 121, which begins thus:

Unity
of God
sometimes
recognized.

“In the beginning there arose the source of golden light. I’c was the only born Lord of all that is. He established the earth and this sky. Who is the God to whom we shall offer our sacrifice?

¹ Monier Williams, *Indian Wisdom*, p. 9.

“He who gives life. He who gives strength ; whose blessing all the bright gods desire ; whose shadow is immortality, whose shadow is death. Who is the God to whom we shall offer our sacrifice ? . . .

“He through whom the sky is bright and the earth firm. He through whom heaven was established ; nay, the highest heaven. He who measured out the light in the air. Who is the God to whom we shall offer our sacrifice ?”¹ . . .

There is a considerable resemblance between this hymn and the 104th Psalm. The refrain reminds us of such Psalms as the 107th and 136th.

Perhaps we may recall the 139th, in connection with the following in praise of Varuna, or the Investing Sky.

“The mighty Varuna, who rules above, looks down
Upon these worlds, his kingdom, as if close at hand.
When men imagine they do aught by stealth he knows it.
No one can stand or walk, or softly glide along,
Or hide in dark recess, or lurk in secret cell
But Varuna detects him, and his movement spies.

His omni-
presence.

Resem-
blance
to Psalm
139.

Whate'er exists within this earth, and all within the sky,
Yea, all that is beyond, King Varuna perceives.
The winkings of men's eyes are numbered all by him.
He wields the universe, as gamesters handle dice.”²

The first part of the 19th Psalm will be recalled by sundry hymns on the sun and on the dawn—a favourite theme. We give a few lines from Rig-Veda i. 50.

Resem-
blance to
Psalm 19.

“With speed, beyond the ken of mortals, thou, O Sun,
Dost ever travel on, conspicuous to all
Thou dost create the light, and with it dost illumine

¹ Müller's *Ancient Sanscrit Literature*, p. 569.

² Williams' *Indian Wisdom*, pp. 15, 16.

The universe entire ; thou risest in the sight
Of all the race of men, and all the host of heaven,
Light-giving Varuna ! thy piercing glance doth scan
In quick succession all this stirring active world,
And penetrateth too the broad ethereal space,
Measuring our days and nights, and spying out all
creatures.”¹

The
praise of
the Dawn.

More sprightly and enthusiastic is the following
to Ushas, the Dawn—

“ Hail, ruddy Ushas, golden goddess borne
Upon thy shining car, thou comest like
A lovely maiden by her mother decked,
Disclosing coyly all thy hidden graces
To our admiring eyes ; or like a wife,
Unveiling to her lord, with conscious pride,
Beauties which, as he gazes lovingly,
Seem fresher, fairer, each succeeding morn.
Thro’ years on years thou hast lived on, and yet
Thou’rt ever young. Thou art the breath of life
Of all that breathes and lives, awaking day by day
Myriads of prostrate sleepers, as from death
Causing the birds to flutter from their nests,
And rousing men to ply with busy feet
Their daily duties and appointed tasks,
Toiling for wealth, or pleasure, or renown.”²

As in some of the Psalms, adoration of the deity
holds a first place :

Adoration
of God.

“ Of which God now, of which of the immortals shall we
invoke the amiable name ? Let us invoke the amiable name of
Aditi ; of the divine Agni, first of the Immortals ; of Varuna,
the thousand-eyed, skilful-handed, possessed of all resources,
embracing the three worlds, whose breath is the wind, who
knows the flight of the birds, the course of the far travelling
wind, and is a witness of human truth and falsehood.”³

¹ Williams’ *Indian Wisdom*, p. 19.

² *Ibid.* p. 20.

³ Muir’s *Sanscrit Texts*.

All the hymns now quoted exalt the natural attributes of God, as shown in the physical glory of the universe, in its providential government, and in the constant watchfulness which God maintains over man and all his actions. This beyond all question, is the highest feature of the Vedas. In this region the writers are at home; here they stretch out their wings and roam with delight. But it will be observed that several of these pieces are not hymns, but poems. They are poetical pictures of the forces of nature. The poems on the Dawn have been compared to Guido's picture—both works of art, word-painting in the one case, colour-painting in the other. And as to the notion of the Supreme Being conveyed in them, it is very misty. How could it be otherwise when the attributes of the Supreme are ascribed now to one being, now to another? The question, Who is the god to whom we shall offer sacrifice? gets no satisfactory answer. At one time it is Indra, at another Agni, at a third Varuna. Max Müller, while making much of the hymns, acknowledges that their language was but "infantile prattle," "they looked, they saw, they thought, they spoke as children." But, as the late Dean Church has remarked:

Especially
His natural
attributes.

Notion
of Supreme
Being misty.

"They spoke
as children."

"The question is not of language but of substance, of the central substance of an idea, upon which the whole meaning and fate and history of a religion depend. There is no bridging over the interval between the one Supreme, Almighty, Most

Dean
Church's
criticism.

Holy God, and any idea of divinity, or of divine powers, many or few, which comes short of it. . . . Language which belongs to a very early period of the world's history did not prevent the thought of the one living God—"I am that I am"—from being grasped and held fast by another Asiatic people, did not for a moment cloud or perplex it—that thought which the poets of the Veda just saw without recognizing its value, its final and supreme truth."¹

Moral
attributes
less adverted
to.

In these hymns of the Veda, the *moral* attributes of God are touched much more sparingly. Sin is recognized, but not prominently; forgiveness is sought, but not consciously obtained. The following is from a hymn to Agni, the god of fire, and especially of sacrificial fire. After a copious adoration of him, as "sage, priest, king, protector, father of the sacrifice," and as "cherished guest in every household—father, brother, son, friend, benefactor, guardian, all in one," and an exposition of this triple form, as "one in thine essence, but to mortals three, displaying thine eternal triple form as fire on earth, as lightning in the air, as sun in heaven;" the hymn goes on:

A cry for
deliverance
from sin

"Deliver, mighty lord, thy worshippers,
Purge us from taint of sin, and when we die
Deal mercifully with us on the pyre.
Burning our bodies with their load of guilt,
But bearing their eternal part on high,
To luminous abodes and realms of bliss,
For ever there to dwell with righteous men."

¹ *The Sacred Poetry of Early Religion*, by Dean Church.

² Williams, p. 18.

In the following hymn to Varuna there is a louder cry for mercy :

“ Let me not yet, O Varuna, enter into the house of clay ; have mercy, Almighty, have mercy. A cry for mercy.
If I go along trembling, like a cloud driven by the wind ; have mercy, Almighty, have mercy.
Through want of strength, thou strong and bright God, have I gone to the wrong shore ; have mercy, Almighty, have mercy.
Thirst came upon the worshipper though he stood in the midst of the waters ; have mercy, Almighty, have mercy.
Whenever we men, O Varuna, commit an offence before the heavenly host ; whenever we break thy law through thoughtlessness, have mercy, Almighty, have mercy.”¹

Another hymn brings out a fuller sense of sin :

“ Wise and mighty are the works of him who stemmed a-sunder the wide firmaments. He lifted on high the bright and glorious heavens, he stretched out apart the starry sky and the earth. Confession of sin.

“ Do I say this to my own self ? How can I get near to Varuna ? Will he accept my offering without displeasure ? When shall I with quiet mind see him propitiated ?

“ I ask Varuna, wishing to know this my sin : I go to ask the wise. The wise all tell me the same : Varuna it is who is angry with thee.

“ Was it for an old sin, O Varuna, that thou wishest to destroy thy friend, who always praises thee ? Tell me, thou unconquerable Lord ! and I will quickly turn to thee with praise, freed from sin.

“ Absolve us from the sins of our fathers, and from those which we have committed with our own bodies. . . . It was not our own doing, O Varuna, it was a slip ; an intoxicating draught, passion, vice, thoughtlessness. The old is there to mislead the young ; even sleep is not free from mischief.

“ Let me without sin give satisfaction to the angry God, like a slave to his bounteous lord. The Lord enlighteneth the foolish ; he, the most wise, leads his worshippers to wealth.

¹ M. Müller.

“O Lord Varuna, may this song go well to thine heart! May we prosper in keeping and acquiring. Protect us, O God, always with your blessings.”¹

THE VEDAS COMPARED WITH THE PSALMS.

No consciousness of forgiveness in the Vedas.

These Vedas are very interesting and touching songs, with their sense of guilt and cry for mercy. How many a professed Christian do they rebuke, who has never felt the one or implored the other! But there is a great contrast between them and the penitential Psalms in this, that in the Vedas, while forgiveness is sought, it is not found. There is no jubilant note—“Blessed is the man whose transgression is forgiven.” There is no joyful sense of sin removed—“As far as east is from the west, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us.” There is not even that acknowledgment of absolute unworthiness which throws itself fully and unreservedly on God’s mercy, as in the Psalm—“Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.” On the contrary, even in the hymn last quoted, which Bunsen has compared to the 51st Psalm, there is a certain self-justifying spirit—“It was not our own doing, O Varuna, it was a slip; an intoxicating draught, passion, vice, thoughtlessness.” This looks as if the worshipper deemed it necessary to find in himself some justifying, or at least extenuating plea.

The sense of sin deficient.

¹ Max Müller’s Translation.

The difference between veda and psalm lies in this, that the Hebrew worshipper had somehow attained to belief in God as the God of redemption, while the pagan worshipper had not. To know God as the God of redemption is the only way to peace, and to joyful confidence in Him. This was the especial privilege of the Hebrew. It came to him by special revelation. It was not the result of his own cogitation or speculation on the nature of the gods. It was too high a conception for him to reach by his human powers. It came to the Hebrew when the Lord proclaimed his memorial in the desert—"The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty" (Exod. xxxiv. 6).

God not known as God of redemption.

The Hebrew conception of God.

And the joy of this conception of God did not stop with itself. It brightened and warmed as with a friendly glow God's revelation of Himself in nature. For nature's voices are sweeter and her visions fairer, when connected with Him who has forgiven His prodigal son, and welcomed him to His bosom with delight. Moreover this view of God seems to open up His whole nature more fully, and to give us a profounder view of all His excellence. It gives us a warm complacency in His infinite perfection :

Nature is brightened by doctrine of redemption.

"Thy mercy, O Lord ! is in the heavens, and Thy faithful-

Nature illustrates profundity of God's attributes.

ness reacheth unto the clouds. Thy righteousness is like the great mountains ; Thy judgments are a great deep : O Lord, Thou preservest man and beast."

Nature thus helps us to apprehend God's high perfections, and to enter into the enjoyment of them :

And the blessed results of nearness to Him.

"How excellent is Thy lovingkindness, O God ! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of Thy wings. They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of Thy house, and Thou shalt make them drink of the river of Thy pleasures. For with Thee is the fountain of life ! in Thy light we shall see light."

Communion leads to conformity.

This the true basis of sanctification.

This knowledge of God as a redeeming God, greatly enhances the sense of enjoyment in His fellowship, while at the same time it stimulates the desire for conformity to His image. Such conformity ever comes from complacent fellowship between a lower being and a higher. Luther has well remarked that the hinge of the 23rd Psalm is the pronoun "my" in the first verse—"The Lord is my shepherd." It is only when we know God as our Redeemer, that we can freely use this personal pronoun. It is only this that can give the sense of perfect oneness, of a fellowship without break or barrier. Then the heart can pour itself out, "O God, Thou art my God, early will I seek Thee : my soul thirsteth, my flesh longeth for Thee in a dry and thirsty land where there is no water." "As the hart panteth after the waterbrooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God." On this foundation, the work of sanctification may advance

by leaps and bounds. The desire for conformity to the divine will rules the heart, and the sum of its wishes is expressed in the words, "I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with Thy likeness."

HYMNS OF THE ZEND AVESTA.

Next to the hymns of the Rig-Veda, in elevation of sentiment and tone, and only a little after them in date, come those of the Zend Avesta, the sacred book of Zoroaster and the Persians. The fundamental principle of the religion of Zoroaster, as is well known, is the existence of two great Beings, under whom the world exists; the one representing the principle of good, Ormazd; the other, Ahriman, of evil. The evil being is the object of abhorrence, the good alone is to be worshipped. It needs not to be said that a good being limited in this way must be a very different god from Him who "doeth according to His will in the armies of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth;" whose hand none can stay, to whom none can say, What doest Thou? Of Zoroaster it is to be said that personally he was profoundly impressed with the dread distinction between good and evil, with the awful character of sin. What he urged on his people with the greatest earnestness, was, that they should range themselves on the side of good; he called upon them

Persian religion and hymns.

Idea of two divine beings.

Dan. 4. 35.

Zoroaster impressed with evil of sin.

Desired his people to take side with the good being.

to recognise in Ormazd all the excellences that deserved their homage, and to seek to enter into his spirit and co-operate in his work.

The Zend Avesta, to a large extent, consists of hymns, prayers, and exhortations directed to this object. The five "Gathas" are believed to have been written by Zoroaster himself, and stand in the first rank as sacred songs.¹ The hymns are usually of great length, and unsuitable for our space. The following may give some idea of their tenor :

The
"Gathas."

"Blessed is he, blessed is every one to whom Ahuramazda (Ormazd), ruling by his own will, shall grant the two everlasting powers (health and immortality). For this very good I beseech thee (Ahuramazda). Mayest thou, through thy angel of piety, give me happiness, the good true things and the possession of the good mind.

"I believe thee to be the best being of all, the source of light for the world. Every one shall choose thee (believe in thee) as the source of light, thee, O Mazda, most beneficent spirit ! Thou createst all good true things by means of the power of thy good mind at any time, and promisedst us (who believe in thee) a long life. . . .

"Thus prays, O Ahuramazda ! Zarathushtra (Zoroaster) and every holy (pure) man for all that choose (as their guide) the most beneficent spirit. May vitality and righteousness (the foundations of the good creation) become predominant in the world ! In every being which beholds the sun's light may Armaiti (the spirit of piety) reside ! She who causes all growth by her actions through the good mind."²

They call us
to worship
Ormazd.

This is the one predominating sentiment in the hymns of the Gathas, and, indeed, of the subsequent parts of the Zend Avesta, too ; only, in the

¹ Haug's *Essays on the Parsis*, pp. 146, 257.

² *Ibid.* pp. 157, 158.

latter, the servants of Ormazd are brought in to share his worship, including the guardian angels, and ritualistic observances are elaborately dwelt on necessary to acceptable service. Even spells are not considered unworthy of consideration. Those who wish an antidote to the influence of evil spirits are told to call on Ormazd by his twenty names, who promises that "he will come to assist and help them, the angel Srosh will come to assist and help them, the spirits of the waters and trees, and the spirits of deceased righteous men."¹ Among the objects of worship, the Sun, as we might expect, comes in for a chief place.

The Sun an object of worship.

HYMNS OF THE ZEND AVESTA COMPARED WITH THE PSALMS.

While the Zend Avesta thus systematically calls its people to adore the good Being and follow him, it does not bring the worshipper into any intimate or happy relation to him, or give him that real satisfaction and enjoyment in him which is so characteristic of the Psalms. Of sin as weakness it has much to say, but as guilt very little. In some hymns there are copious confessions of sin, with expressions of repentance and prayer for pardon.² But pardon does not seem difficult to be

The Zend Avesta hymns do not bring men into happy relation to God.

¹ Haug's *Essays on the Parsis*, p. 195.

² In Freeman Clarke's *Ten Great Religions*, vol. I. 191, a full confession of this kind is given.

had. It follows from renunciation. "If other wicked deeds were perpetrated by him" (says the Vendidad, Fargard III.) "his atonement is through *patita* (renunciation of sin); moreover, if other wicked deeds were not perpetrated by him, the *patita* (acquittal) of that man is (completed) for ever and ever."¹

The powers of nature less recognised than in the Vedas.

We notice, moreover, in these hymns of the Zend Avesta, much less recognition of the powers of nature than even in the Vedas. Throughout, the Zoroastrian hymns are founded on the identity of religion and morality. And yet when we come to directions for worship, as contained in some of the later books, we are forcibly reminded of the Pharisees making void the law by their traditions. If one man carries a dead body, he is polluted, the spirit of pollution rushes out of him by all the outlets of the body; but nothing of the kind takes place when it is carried by two.

Silly ceremonialism.

"The mouth-veil (of the lay worshipper) may be of any stuff, and while it keeps back the mouth it must be two fingers beyond. . . . The two ties project as ringlets; it should be double and it should be perfect; some say that one is behind, and it should be stronger than that which even the Kûsti requires. With a mouth-veil once tied which is single and strong, while it is not allowable to pray for the Darûn yet unrepresented for tasting, it is allowable to perform the ceremony."²

The order of progress which we find in our Scriptures is reversed in Zoroastrianism; as we advance

¹ Haug, p. 318.

² Haug, p. 365.

from the Old Testament to the New, ceremonialism passes away, and gives place to spiritual worship ; in the Zend Avesta the worship is comparatively simple at the beginning, but towards the close it is smothered with ceremonialism. In any religion, an elaborate ceremonialism at the end bodes no good.

HYMNS OF OTHER RELIGIONS.

We pass over Mohammedanism and Buddhism as not presenting anything notable on the subject of this Tract.

Nor is Confucianism rich in hymn literature. We take from Dr. Legge an account of a series of prayers offered to Shang-Ti by the Emperor of China in 1538. On a given day the Emperor and his court assembled round the circular altar, and after prostrating themselves eleven times, addressed the great being in the following hymn :—

“Thou, O Ti ! didst open the way for the forces of matter to operate ; thou, O Spirit ! didst produce the beautiful light of the sun and moon, that all thy creatures might be happy. A
Confucian
hymn.

“Thou hast vouchsafed to hear us, O Ti, for thou regardest us as thy children. I, thy child, dull and ignorant, can poorly express my feelings. Honourable is thy great name.”

Food was then placed on the altar, first boiled meat, then cups of wine, and Ti was requested to receive them in these words : Altar
offerings.

“The Sovereign Spirit deigns to accept our offering. Give thy people happiness. Send down thy favour. All creatures

are upheld by thy love. Thou alone art the true parent of all things.

"The service of song is now completed, but our poor sincerity cannot be expressed aright. The sense of thy goodness is in our heart. We have adored thee, and would unite with all spirits in honouring thy name. We place it on this sacred piece of paper, and now put it in the fire with precious silks, that the smoke may go up with our prayers to the distant blue heavens. Let all the ends of the earth rejoice in thy name."¹

Contrast to
Psalms.

Despite the superstition of the food, the divine name on the paper and the burning silk, there is here a touching act of homage, and the expression of a desire that seems to be genuine, to show gratitude to the Supreme. Yet is it a great contrast to the Psalms. The worshipper has not been brought near. He is worshipping afar off. He has not come to the New Jerusalem, the heavenly Zion, nor to the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better things than that of Abel.

Assyrian
hymns.

Of Assyrian hymns we have already some specimens, and in this field we may well hope one day to reap a more plentiful harvest. Penitential songs are sometimes very earnest:

A peniten-
tial hymn.

"O my Lord, my sins are many, my trespasses are great,
And the wrath of the gods hath plunged me with disease
And with sickness and sorrow. I fainted, but no one
stretched forth his hand;
I groaned, but no one drew nigh;
I cried aloud, and no one heard.
O Lord, do not abandon thy servant!

¹ Quoted in Freeman Clarke's *Ten Great Religions*, vol. II. pp. 231, 232.

In the waters of the great storm seize his hand !
The sins which he has committed turn thou to righteousness.
O my God, my sins are seven times seven."¹

What follows is the prayer of Asshur-da-ni-pal,
B.C. 650, from a tablet in the British Museum.

"May the look of pity that shines in thine eternal face dispel my griefs. An appeal for mercy.
May I never feel the anger and wrath of the God.
May my omissions and my sins be wiped out.
May I find reconciliation with him, for I am the servant of his power, the adorer of the great gods.
May thy powerful face come to my help ! may it shine like heaven, and bless me with happiness and abundance of riches.
May it bring forth in abundance like the earth happiness and every sort of good."

CONCLUSION.

THERE is no reason why we should not look with profound interest and respect on many of these outpourings of the human spirit to the Supreme Being. There is no need to restrain our charity or suppress the gentle hope *that* some of those who raised these cries were taught to utter them by the living God. But who does not see at once how vastly inferior they all are to the Psalms? From the best and highest outpourings of heathen hearts to God we turn to the Psalms with a new sense of their unrivalled excellence. We are conscious of a new admiration for their

Respect due to non-Christian hymns.

Superiority of the Psalms.

¹ See *Records of the Past*, vol. iii. p. 136.

Majestic
representa-
tion of the
one God.

majestic representation of the Supreme Being, the one living and true God, who ruleth in heaven and earth, unapproached and unapproachable; who alone is to be worshipped, alike by the hosts of heaven and the people of earth, by fire and wind and vapour, and all the powers of nature, by mountain and forest and flood, and every creature that hath a being. We see a new charm in that fellowship with His creature man of which the Psalms are the record, a fellowship in which His infinite abhorrence of sin is blended with His fatherly love for the sinner, and the weak, guilty, erring child of humanity becomes the object of a care and a love that no heathen could have imagined. We see with wonder and delight how near this God is to His child in times of trouble, how He lifts him up, dries his tears, restores his soul, and sends him on his way rejoicing. We feel the force of the obligation under which this pardoned, accepted, adopted child of humanity is thus brought to make the will of this God the great rule of his life, and the likeness of God the supreme object of his desire. From whatever source the rays of light and comfort in other songs may have come, we feel assured that the Psalms are God's own gift to men; it is He that has put these songs in their mouths, and who teaches us to sing, "The Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song, He also is become my salvation."

Charm
of the
fellowship
between God
and man.

The
Psalms
God's gift
to man.

And there is this further to be said for the Psalms that they have stood their ground for whole millenniums, and have been welcomed with fresh delight in every quarter of the globe and by men of every tribe and people and tongue. Of what other sacred songs can this be said? What admirer of the Vedas, however enthusiastic, would ever desire to make use of them as we use the Psalms? What forlorn and weary pilgrim would ever turn to the Zend Avesta, as many turn to the Psalms, in hours of sadness and loneliness, or of spiritual depression? In what literature have any of these hymns become indigenous, as the Psalms have become in all? How is this marvellous adaptation for all needs, and popularity in all lands to be accounted for? What at the best are Vedas and Gathas but interesting antiquarian relics, showing us, as flint axes and bronze hammers show us, how our distant forefathers got along in the one case before modern art and science had come to the help of man, and in the other before God's full and final revelation was given? But the Psalms have proved real forces in human life, enlightening, guiding and comforting, strengthening and purifying character, teaching men's hands to war and their fingers to fight, inspiring the faith that removes mountains, and the hope that even in the lowest depth of adversity waits patiently for the dawn. And around the parent stem, as it were,

Historical
endurance
of the
Psalms.

Their
adaptation
to all
classes and
times.

Their vast
progeny.

Christian
hymns.

around the songs inspired by the Holy Ghost as part of the sacred volume, there has grown up a vast multitude of similar compositions, placing the old truths in new settings, throwing on them the direct light of the Gospel, and embodying, on the same lines, every variety of experience and aspiration known to the human soul.

The Psalms cannot be of mere human manufacture. Reason itself demands for them a **higher origin**. They are like the stars,

“For ever singing as they shine,
The Hand that made us is divine.”



THE ORIGIN
OF
LIFE AND CONSCIOUSNESS
BY THE
REV. CHARLES CHAPMAN, M.A., L.L.D,

Argument of the Tract.

A DESIRE exists to know the Origin of Life and Consciousness. It is assumed that Life has a very remote origin, and that research is reasonable in reference to it. The general method possible to the inquiry. Three hypotheses—Biogenesis, Creation, Abiogenesis. The question is which of these applies to the case before us. General argument for Abiogenesis from the Law of Continuity stated, and shown to be inadequate. The argument of the *Mechanical School* mainly lies in appealing to the instability of elements in organic bodies, the asserted artificial production of certain organic compounds, and the peculiarities of the one formal basis of life. The inference from instability not warranted; the artificial production of organic compounds not admitted by authorities on Chemistry, and the facts asserted concerning Protoplasm either not allowed, or not adequate for the purpose intended. The subsidiary argument from the comparison of crystals and organisms lacking in the essential point. Spontaneous Generation disallowed by the most eminent scientific men. Professor Huxley's rejection of Dr. Bastian's evidence. Mr. Spencer's rejection of Spontaneous Generation accompanied by a mere speculation. Professor Clifford's speculation affords no gleam of a solution. The affirmation of Professor Stokes of something beyond matter and force. The *Non-Mechanical School*, as represented by Lotze, Stahl, Leibnitz, Stewart, and Tait, offer speculations, which leave the mystery as great as ever. Consciousness distinguished from Life. The essential difference between Consciousness and the material organism and its movements admitted by Mr. Spencer. The spiritualization of matter is no solution of the question. The argument of Leibnitz is only an assumption, as also is that of the authors of the *Unseen Universe*. The utter helplessness of the Mechanical School in presence of the fact of Consciousness. Mr. Spencer's position, though not intended, virtually refers the Origin of Consciousness to Creation. Revelation the only reliable authority.

THE ORIGIN OF LIFE AND CONSCIOUSNESS.



It is very natural that man, in his eager quest of knowledge, should desire to know, if possible, with some degree of certainty, the origin of Life and Consciousness. The modern spirit seems to be able to find no rest in tracing the order of external events; it must find out how and when that began which observes and discusses all else. It is well known to Christians that the Bible emphatically ascribes the origin of Life to the act of God. Of late years scientific inquiry has, in the case of many able men, tended to either directly contravene the Biblical doctrine, or else to put on the Biblical reference to the subject an interpretation which pushes the Divine action back to the primordial Creation of the units of matter, out of which all else is supposed to have gradually come by a process of development.

It is then important both in the interests of Religion and of Science to note what, apart from

Desire to
know the
origin of
Life.

What light
Science has
to give on
the ques-
tion.

Scripture, has been attempted in the solution of this question, and what value is to be attached to the conclusions arrived at. Have we any light superior to that shed on the subject by the Bible? Is it within the power of Science, even when aided by Philosophy, to clear up the difficulties experienced the moment we depart from the teaching of Revelation? Or are the probabilities raised by Science of such a nature that, acting on the principle laid down by Butler, we are bound to accept, as a rule of thought, the conclusion arrived at as practically authoritative? The question then of the lover of truth is, What positive information does modern research afford us? What is the conclusion, as to the means and circumstances by which Life first appeared, that may be held as most satisfactory? If it should be found that Science after all her efforts finds the problem too tough for solution, what is the attitude it becomes reasonable men to assume in relation to the language of Scripture in reference to it?

The relation
of Life to
Conscious-
ness.

It will be observed that the word 'Consciousness' has been associated with the word 'Life' in the statement of the subject before us. The reason for this will appear as we proceed. It may suffice here simply to state that among scientific men there are differences of opinion as to whether Life and Consciousness are essentially distinct, or only different aspects of the same thing. In the

opinion of some, as we shall see, life, even in its lowest form, does not exist apart from consciousness; and consequently, in accounting for the origin of the one, we virtually account for the origin of the other. In the opinion of others, 'Consciousness,' though it be germinal, comprehends much more than is implied in or connoted by 'Life;' and in that case the line of demarcation will have to be drawn, and a separate explanation will have to be given of their concomitant or separate emergence. The fact that there is such a difference of view as to the relation of Life and Consciousness suggests that in entering on the discussion we should have clear and distinct ideas on the points at issue.

I.—THE ORIGIN OF LIFE.

AT the outset, whether we take the Biblical view or that which is supposed to supplant it, we have to accept the position that the first life appeared in this world, in some very minute form, far back in the history of the globe. Whether we take 100,000,000 years as the extreme limit of time during which life has been possible on the earth, according to Sir William Thomson's calculation, on the basis afforded by the physical sciences; or, 300,000,000, as required by Darwin for the possible structure of his hypothesis of Natural Selection; or 1,000,000,000, as some

The early
appearance
of Life

The
supposed
conditions
of its ap-
pearance.

wild enthusiasts for organic Evolution would claim, makes no real difference to us on this occasion. Both Evolutionists, such as Darwin and Haeckel, and *non*-Evolutionists, such as Dawson and Louis Agassiz, have equally accepted the fact that geological evidence points to the conclusion that the appearance of life on the earth was in the first instance in some form extremely simple. So that the question for solution, if possible, is, How did that primordial form of life arise? From whence did it come? What conditions, if any, antecedent to it, issued in its appearance as a new phenomenon in the midst of a world otherwise and exclusively inorganic?

The importance of this question and the difficulty of answering it spring largely from the fact, which all scientific men of every school admit, namely, that the difference between the organic and the inorganic is most decisively marked. As we shall see, attempts have been made by some to minimise the difference, with a view to a certain theory as to the origin of Life; but, apart from theories of origin, and looked at as a phenomenon in the world, it is admitted that there is a great gulf between the living and the *non*-living—the organic and the inorganic. Professor Huxley says in his article ‘Biology,’ in the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, that ‘the properties of living matter distinguish it absolutely from all other kinds of things.’¹ The

¹ Vol. iii., p. 679.

smallest living speck known to science—though only $\frac{1}{20,400}$ of an inch in breadth—exhibits, as Dr. Dallinger has so wonderfully shown, the essential characteristics of the more elaborate organic structures. ‘It moves,’ he says, ‘with the agility of the grayling and the grace of a swallow;’ ‘it effects,’ by the assimilation of surrounding matter to its own, ‘analyses and complicated syntheses which . . . baffle all the synthetic chemistry of man,’ and, also, ‘it multiplies with astounding rapidity.’ The problem is, then, to say whence came in the past history of the earth the earliest form of life?

And let it be understood that our concern is with what is known as *animal* life; though here and there in the treatment of the subject there will be incidental reference to vegetable organisms. Much that is true of animal will apply equally to vegetable life.

METHOD OF TREATMENT.

In any case the origin of Life was far back in the past, and it may seem a vain attempt to affirm anything upon it apart from Revelation. How far it is possible to say anything satisfactory by the mere light of reason will appear as we proceed. It may suffice here just to note that those who devote themselves to these scientific pursuits believe that they are in possession of principles by

which they can apply their acquired knowledge of what is close at hand to the ascertainment of what took place myriads of ages before man was created. For the sake of argument, then, we will concede that the difficulty of the question is not a bar to inquiry.

Method of
Inquiry.

We thus have to settle the method by which it is possible to arrive at some conclusion—seeing that we were not there to make observations and apply tests when the event took place. Now, the actual mental process followed by those who have worked at the problem seems to have been something of this kind. It may be asked, first, whether there are any facts, or well-grounded conclusions, respecting the course of Nature, and especially respecting the successive changes in the upward line of the world's history, which may give a clue to, or serve to suggest, the conditions and circumstances antecedent to, and concurrent in, the first appearance of life. In other words, are we in possession of any scientific knowledge which points, with any high degree of probability, to the actual method chosen by Providence for the origination of Life? Then, it may be further asked, is there anything in the constitution of a living organism, as we now know it, which, physically considered, indicates the direction in which we are to look for its origin in the first instance? Can we reason back from what we now find to be in an organic

Steps in the
Inquiry.

structure to the formation of the simplest structure at the first? Still further, it may be asked, looking at the compounds that enter into present living organisms, is it possible by any application of skill in the combination of elements to approximately produce such matter at our pleasure? In other words, can any animal matter be produced out of materials that have never been part of an animal structure; and, if so, does not this point to a certain origin of the first structure? Once more, it may be asked, is it possible, by any observation combined with experiment, to discover and produce physical conditions, which, apart from the presence of any living organism, shall issue in the appearance of very minute forms of Life? In other terms, can we artificially create circumstances and conditions analogous to those which may be presumed to have existed just before Life came into the world's order, and out of those circumstances and conditions observe Life now to originate *de novo*, i.e. apart from parentage or any supermundane power? And finally, should any or all of these methods of research combined ultimately fail in solving the question, it may yet be asked whether, exercising the right of speculative inquiry, anything is known to be, or may be reasonably believed to have been, inherent in the original constitution of the ultimate units which enter into the structure of all things, of such a nature as, by

An ascent
to the con-
stitution of
Matter.

development in the course of time, would account for the appearance of Life at an early age in the earth's history?

Modes of
originating
Organisms.

By way of anticipation and preparing for details, it may here be observed that pursuing a course of thought, in whole or in part, like that just sketched, some scientific men of considerable authority believe that they have been able to arrive at a fairly satisfactory conclusion as to the origin of Life in the first instance. On reflection it will be found that there are only three conceivable means by which a living organism can come into existence: by parentage, *ovum ex ovo*; by some direct act of the Eternal from outside or within the line of Nature; or by the natural action of pre-existing conditions in the inorganic order, or in the ultimate constitution of things.

Biogenesis.

Biogenesis, Creation, Abiogenesis—are the recognized terms for indicating the possible origin of life. As to the first, Biogenesis—Life from Life—that is, of course, now true of us and of the organic world as a whole. The smallest microscopic speck and the largest elephant owe their existence to a parent; and this law applies to the entire range of organic history covered by Palæontology. But obviously it is ruled out in reference to the first life. There was no father of the first father. The earliest organism was virtually more than an orphan. The issue then lies between

Creation.

Creation and Abiogenesis. In saying this, it should be understood that there are two uses of the term Creation—one is that which implies a direct act of Eternal Power—the Eternal Energy acting *de novo* and from outside or from within the course of Nature, according to the Philosophy we hold to; the other is that which implies that ALL the processes of Nature are the outcome of the Eternal Power—the forms of His Energy, so that, as Descartes expressed it, the world in its development is an act of ‘Continuous Creation.’ The issue to which we are now referring, in the opinion of many, lies between Creation as a direct act and the natural action of pre-existing conditions, which, to all except rank materialists, is practically the ‘Continuous Creation’ of Descartes. The immediate question is, then, *What is the evidence adduced for the exclusion of any conceivable origin of Life except* that it was the outcome of the natural action of pre-existing conditions?

Abiogenesis.

Creation or
Abiogenesis.

THE GENERAL ARGUMENT.

The primary general consideration, in the logical order, is that derived from the recognition of the Scientific Principle of Continuity. There is a common tendency in us all to seek what is termed some natural cause for everything we see—some antecedent condition of things out of which it

General
argument
for
Abiogenesis

arose. The child asks what does the bubble on the water come from, and when he is informed of the natural cause he marvels and is satisfied. The chemist seeks to find the cause of ordinary gas being inflammable, and when he traces the flame to a set of concurring physical antecedents he marvels and is satisfied. This tendency in human nature has been the spring of all research, and, in the hands of Science, has issued in the formulation of a principle known as that of Continuity ; *i.e.*, there is a continuous connection in the natural antecedents and consequents which make up the sum of events in the course of things. It is well known that the Principle of Continuity, as expounded by Sir William Grove, and recognized in all departments of modern Science, and sanctioned by the philosophical demand for unity, carries with it, when we come face to face with any strange event and want to know its genesis, a logical force hard to resist. When it is observed in all the natural and physical sciences, and also in psychology, that every event, or change in the appearance of things, is preceded by some other event, or change, or condition of things which stands to it in the relation of cause, or one of the causes, that explain its emergence ; and when the common everyday observation of the untutored points in the same direction, it is obvious that we are on the track of a principle that must exercise a potent influence in

The force
of Con-
tinuity as
an argu-
ment.

our interpretation of things. It is this uniformity in the connexion of antecedents and consequents which constitutes the stability of the course of Nature, furnishes a reliable basis for all our calculations in practical affairs ; and, in fact, renders it possible to attain to a rational conception of the material and social order. As applied, then, to the question of the origin of the first organic form, it seems to raise an *a priori* presumption in favour of *its* being included within the order of Nature—in other words, that *it* is to be referred to the natural action of some antecedent condition of things. Those who take this view think that it would require extraordinary reasons to compel the belief that, in the emergence of Life on the earth, the Continuity everywhere else prevailing comes to an end, or rather is broken in twain. To Evolutionists the argument seems irresistible. For there is, they affirm, abundant reason for thinking there was unbroken Continuity in the succession of changes which, through myriads of years, occurred in the passage of the primordial units of matter, from their state of diffused simplicity, up to the highly differentiated condition of things on the globe just prior to the appearance of the first life ; and, unless the hypothesis of Organic Evolution be a delusion, there has been unbroken Continuity in the outcome of Life from Life from the first dawn of Life up to the present. Thus there was

A priori
presumption
for the
Evolution
of Life.

Continuity
before and
after the
appearance
of Life.

one law of things before Life appeared, and there has been one and the same law of things ever since Life appeared: in other words, Continuity runs through these two lines of change. Is then, it may be asked, the emergence of Life in the first instance, the only exception to the law of all phenomena? Is Continuity broken only once in the history of things? Philosophical love of unity, scientific generalizations and plain common sense seem to say 'No!' Continuity has not been broken—the Emergence of Life must surely have been in keeping with the otherwise universal law, *i.e.*, Life came from the natural action of some pre-existing condition of things.

This the
common
position
of all
opponents
of Creation.

Such is the argument usually adduced from Continuity considered as a scientific principle. We have striven to put it in as clear and forcible a way as possible, because it stands at the head of the reasoning which seeks to show that Life was not Created in the ordinary Biblical sense, at least; and because it is that argument on which great authorities agree, though they may differ among themselves as to what were those antecedent natural conditions out of which by Evolution Life is thought to have arisen.

The
argument
from
Continuity
tested.

Before proceeding to notice the different explanations that have been proposed of the pre-existing conditions out of which Life is said to have come, it may be useful to see what can be said on the

other side with respect to the argument from Continuity, so strongly insisted on by all Evolutionists. For if this *a priori* reasoning is unassailable the whole case is closed as to the general question, though not as to the precise conditions out of which, in pursuance of Continuity, Life evolved. Now, can we not imagine a thoughtful man taking some such position as this? 'I pass over for the present purpose your remark about Organic Evolution subsequent to the appearance of Life involving unbroken Continuity, simply observing that that is itself with some a debateable point. Your main position is that in the generally admitted principle of Continuity, as understood in modern Science, and as now explained by you, you find an *a priori* presumption in favour of your view of the origin of Life. Well, I am prepared to admit a Continuity, though, of course, *the real question now is, whether it is absolute or relative*. If it is absolute, universal, of course, your view of the origin of Life is right. I cannot, however, allow *that* in this argument, because *that* is the whole question at issue. I grant that if you can make out Continuity up to the appearance of Life, and then Continuity after its appearance, you do make out a very strong case—a case which is not to be set aside by a sneer at your great knowledge, or any *ex cathedra* assertion. At the same time, there

The real question one of Absolute or Relative Continuity.

A priori
considera-
tions
demand
care in use.

A counter
presump-
tion.

are a few suggestions which I would respectfully submit for your candid consideration. In the first place, you know how, in days gone by, Lord Bacon rather objected to the reasoning of Schoolmen, because of its being based largely on *a priori* considerations; and, although we live in enlightened times, I am not aware that we have quite got rid of the feeling of risk in trusting freely to presumptions founded on *a priori* considerations. They are more suited perhaps to the deductive metaphysician than to the investigation of natural facts. But, as we are dealing with *a priori* presumptions, may I remind you of a very important fact, namely, that the chief authorities in natural Science are one in declaring that the law of Nature now is, and all along through the Palæontological ages has been, that Life only comes from Life. Now, does not so uniform and steadfast a course of Nature, extending over millions of years, raise the counter presumption to yours, that the origin of the first life is certainly not to be sought in that which was not living? Do you think it seemly for Nature, the mother you say of us all, to have two distinct methods of bearing her numerous children? That does not look like Continuity, in one sense of the word, at least. And if you think that Nature could do her work far back in the past in a way different from that in which she has been accustomed to do it

ever since, because the atmospheric conditions were different, are you not burdening your position with multiplied hypotheses? Of course, you will admit that the atoms and their wonderful original adjustments in permanent mathematical proportions had a beginning—a Cause beyond themselves. Does it then seem to you an incredible thing that, after the play of atoms had progressed in beautiful continuity, for myriads of years, till they reached the point of their evolution that would fit them to be the vehicle and instrument for the co-ordinated action of some higher and *non-physical* increment, that, then, the Cause of the original atoms and their adjustments should originate that *non-physical* increment? Would that action of introducing a *non-physical* increment that henceforth, in a continuous line, is to perpetuate itself, substantially, or at all, affect the real Continuity of the physical conditions that were to serve as its vehicle and instrument? Nor is this question unwarranted by actual facts. For, if I may anticipate what I may say later on, is not Consciousness a *non-physical* factor which, some time in the long evolutionary progress of the material system, has been added as a correlative or concomitant to the physical order? Nor can I help reminding you that, though Determinism does prevail in Nature, yet somehow, at some point in the progression, **Moral Freedom** has emerged—certainly not from

Original
Creation of
materials a
preparation
for Creation
of *non-*
material.

Evidence
of other
Creations in
ascending
order.

True
Continuity
consistent
with
Creations.

its contradictory, Determinism. I submit such considerations to your careful judgment, so that you may, at all events, see that I am not necessarily ignoring the true physical Continuity when I state my utter inability to see how the phenomena involved in the living organism can be explained, as to origin, by the molecular and chemical laws that operate in the inorganic system of things. In fact, I wish you to understand that, taking into account *all* the facts which present themselves to my view, such as the existence of a rigid Physical Order, of Life, of Consciousness, and of Moral Freedom—four distinct, ascending factors of the universe—I feel myself to be standing in the midst of a vast and mysterious system of things in which factors of a very dissimilar type find scope for existence; and that, therefore, I can, on rational grounds, ascribe the beginning of each of those factors to a common original, without affecting the true Continuity which pertains to the development of each of them when once they are originated. Possibly my position is one you, at present, on the spur of the moment, may hesitate to accept; but I commend it to your consideration as one most reasonable, and the more so as we shall see further on that your position is encompassed with tremendous difficulties of a character different from those here adduced.

Let us now turn our attention to the character

of those antecedent conditions of things out of which it is said that Life in the first instance by a natural process of development emerged. It is here that those who hold to the Evolution of Life as opposed to the Creation of Life differ greatly. It is not easy to find a distinctive term by which each shall be at once accurately described and immediately recognised. The speculations of Evolutionists on this subject are not always on independent lines. It may, however, suffice for our present purpose if the various hypotheses be classified as *mechanical* and *non-mechanical*.

The kind of antecedent conditions implied in the argument.

Mechanical.

Non-mechanical.

A.—THE MECHANICAL SCHOOL.

The Line of Reasoning.

THE most pronounced authorities on the subject of the origin of Life are those who regard the first life as simply and solely the result of the pre-existent dead matter under the action of physical forces. According to the physical system adhered to by this School, all chemical forms and actions are, in the last analysis, supposed to be the outcome of one mechanically acting force. Büchner is the most explicit and aggressive of this School. His words admit of no two interpretations. He says: 'The facts of physical science PROVE, with considerable certainty, that the organic beings which people the earth owe their origin and propagation solely to

Mechanical School.

Life from the interaction of Matter and Force.

Büchner.

the conjoined action of natural forces and materials.’¹ Again, ‘Whence came organic beings? . . . It is from the simplest organic elements produced in the way of spontaneous generation by the combination of inorganic elements.’² And it should be observed that all forms and varieties of inorganic matter, according to Büchner, sprang from the mechanical interaction of the primordial form of matter and force, so that Life is the resultant of all previous interactions. There are some Evolutionists who are disposed to rest chiefly, if not entirely, on the general proof of Evolution as being, in principle, sufficient to cover the question of Life—feeling sensible of the extreme difficulty of adducing anything like cogent positive proofs of an event so remote, and admitting frankly that Life itself is too subtle and structurally impenetrable for the highest human skill to explore and fully analyse. But there are bold men in science as well as in athletics, and so it has been attempted to furnish scientific *data* for the conclusion believed to be indicated by the principle of Continuity. Let us look at these *data*.

General
proof of
Evolution
sufficient.Special
proof.Instability
of elements
in organic
bodies.

1. The origin of Life is, it is thought, by the advocates of the mechanical theory, indicated by *the unstable character of the elements entering into the composition of organic bodies*. Or, to put it

¹ *Force and Matter*, p. 72.² *Ibid.* p. 82.

in another form, the elements of which organic bodies are composed are such as would issue in a remarkable degree of instability; and therefore they form a combination most suited, from a chemical point of view, to undergo metamorphic changes such as do actually characterize living things.¹ Whatever subtlety and mysteriousness there may be in that we call Life may, then, be reasonably ascribed to this chemico-mechanical source. The organic would thus seem to be only a name for the inorganic under special conditions of instability. Protein and other substances which form the essential constituents of living tissue are found to accord with this analysis.

Organic changes result of greater instability.

2. But, also, certain *compounds called organic are producible by artificial means.*² Compounds which were once supposed to be the sole product of a special force, or set of forces called 'vital,' are now shown to be indirectly the product of the chemist's skill; and the hope is that chemical skill will more and more solve the so-called mystery of 'vital' phenomena, so that the hypothesis of Life being essentially different from what else is in the inorganic universe need not be entertained. A finger-post has been found pointing to the truth that the word 'vital' is only a name for those incidental forces which were found to be in action in all

Artificial production of organic Compounds.

'Vital' a name only for unstable relations.

¹ Spencer's *Principles of Biology*, i., pp. 1-20.

² Bastian's *Beginnings of Life*, pp. 86, 94.

inorganic bodies, only that in the organic they assume a more complicated and unstable relation one to the other. The interaction of matter and force is the clue to all.

One formal
basis of
Life.

3. Further, there is known to be but *one formal basis of life entering into living things*. That is, there is a certain definite physical combination which is known to be present where there is life, which is not present where there is not life, and which is the basis of all that is built up and done in connexion with life; which, in so far as we have any right to speak, is the only basis of whatever is covered by the term 'Life.' If there be any distinctive property requiring designation by coining the word 'Life,' that property is simply the peculiarity exhibited by, and consequent solely on, a certain ascertainable combination of physical elements, much as in the same way we say that magnetism is a property of matter under given conditions. This doctrine of Protoplasm or Bioplasm, is argued from the following facts:—(1) The *powers* of all kinds of living matter, however diverse in degree, are substantially similar in kind. (2) The fundamental *forms* of all living matter are substantially the same. In the lowest living things the whole structure may consist of a spheroidal form, and the whole structure of the higher animals may consist of transformed shells of successive nuclei of the one simple substance.

Protoplasm.

All living
matter
alike in
(a)
Powers,

(b)
Forms,

(3) The composition of the substance of living matter is the same in all organisms. Protoplasm differs from ordinary matter in the manner in which its atoms are aggregated. It is found in what we call 'Life,' to break up into carbonic acid, water, and ammonia. That is its chemical resolution. There is no 'vital principle' or any mysterious thing, otherwise named or unnamed,¹ in Protoplasm any more than there is in water.

It is these representations of the Mechanical School that explain what Haeckel means when he says that the manifold '*physical and chemical properties of albuminous bodies are the real cause of organic or vital phenomena.*'²

Some of the school, however, qualify the statements concerning the experiments and analyses by the admission that only *dead* protoplasm was examined; and that the presence now of *living* protoplasm is essential to the conversion of inorganic materials into organic.

In the reasoning given the real affinity of vegetable and animal life is assumed, with only such support as may be found in the supposed existence of a low class of organisms which seem to partake of the characteristics of both.³

¹ See Huxley's *Lay Sermons*, Lect. vii., but comp. Beale's *Bioplasm*, pp. 1-75.

² *History of Creation*, i., p. 331; comp. p. 339.

³ *Ibid.*, ii., pp. 47-51. Comp. Bastian's *Beginnings of Life*, i., pp. 115-118

REPLY TO THE REASONING OF THE MECHANICAL SCHOOL.

Now, with reference to the assertions in the argument thus set forth, we have to inquire into their correctness, and the validity of the inferences derived from them.

1. The *first question of fact* is the asserted *instability of the elements of which organizable matter is composed*. This question is most intimately connected with the strong assertion of such Biologists as Beale, that, whatever the elements entering into living matter may be, between its living state and its *non-living* state there is an absolute and irreconcilable difference.¹ It should be observed that Beale's assertion is a fact of Science. Whether the claim that this is to be explained by the existence in living matter of some undefinable thing beyond and in addition to the bare collocation of atoms or not, it is obvious that, supposing it to exist, unstable elements as its vehicle would assuredly more subserve its purpose, or, if that be too teleological an expression, its manifestation, than would elements of less instability. So that, regarded as a matter of pure argument, and it is in that light alone that we wish to regard it, the instability of organizable matter would be no more

Essential
difference
between the
Living and
Non-living
state.

¹ *Bioplasm*, p. 3.

evidence that there is nothing besides the elements than that they are agents of a very subtle *non-molecular* reality. The argument proceeds on the assumption that if there were in the nature of Life any such subtle thing, it would be sure not to manifest its presence in connexion with unstable elements. That can never stand. Besides, if it were so clearly, as Haeckel and Büchner seem to make out, a question of Elements entering into compounds, it is singular that combinations are not formed of the actual elements which are found by analysis to enter into living matter so as to issue in life.

Instability
consistent
with Life
being *sui
generis*.

2. The next *question of fact* is that *Protein lies at the base of all organic compounds, and can be produced by the Chemist's skill*. The term Protein was first applied by Mulder to a precipitate consisting of a gelatinous substance devoid of sulphur, and obtained from Albumenoids by boiling and adding acetic acid. The question as to what Protein is, and what its relation to Albumenoids, is one for Analytic Chemistry; and the question as to whether it can be artificially produced is one of fact, and, that being settled, the next is whether the artificial product is of the same kind as the matter essential to the existence of life, and is a cause of vital phenomena. All that is proper for the present occasion is to note what authorities have to say. Gregory, in his *Organic Chemistry*,¹

The
opinions of
Chemists as
to base of
Compounds,

Mulder.

Gregory.

¹ p. 316.

denies that this theory of Protein being the base is demonstrated, and assigns six formal reasons against it. Moreover, Kane, in his *Chemistry*,¹ says in reference to the same, 'The Protein, I consider not, with Mulder, as the basis of our tissues, but as the simplest product of their decomposition. It enters into combination with acids and with bases, as indigo and morphia, which I look upon as totally foreign to the character of a body possessed of vital properties.' Also, Miller, in his *Organic Chemistry*,² speaking of Albumenoids, says: 'Owing to the complexity of their composition, no satisfactory rational formula can at present be assigned to them, and owing to their indisposition to crystallize, great difficulty is experienced in obtaining them in a state of purity, and of ascertaining when they are free from foreign mixture;' and on page 752, after discussing Mulder's speculation he concludes: 'The nature of this substance and its relation to Albumen require further examination. Indeed, the existence of the whole of these protein compounds, as distinct principles, must be admitted to be very problematical.' Chemistry is a progressive science, and such evidence might be deemed now rather antiquated. It is important, then, to note how the most modern investigators concur in these general results of their predecessors. Roscoe, in his *Elements*,³ says

¹ p. 666.² Part III., p. 745.³ p. 438.

that we are, as yet, very ignorant of the true chemical relations of Albumenoids, and, page 442, that 'our knowledge of the composition and chemical constitution of the substances contained in the animal body is very incomplete.' And as late as 1887, in his address, as President of the British Association, he says: 'One cannot help feeling that the barrier which exists between the organized and unorganized worlds is one which the Chemist sees no chance of breaking down. No such problem lies within his province.' To complete this list, reference may be made to the words of the great French analyst Pasteur, who, in a remarkable passage, recorded in the volume describing his *Life and Labours*,¹ shows by rigid chemical analysis that there is a real distinction between artificial compounds and the matter of life. Pasteur.

Of course, such statements have only an indirect bearing on the main question of the origin of the first life; but if we would be impartial judges we cannot but allow them due weight, as against the claim made by some to prove the evolution of life from purely inorganic conditions, by the asserted possibility of artificially producing organic compounds. There are more sides than one to this question. Bearing of testimonies on the main question.

3. Turning next to the *nature of Protoplasm* in its *bearing on the origin of life*, we have to distinguish

¹ pp. 26, 27.

Facts and
inferences
concerning
Protoplasm.

carefully between admitted facts and the inferences drawn from the facts. That there is a certain physical arrangement involved in the existence of Life is, of course, involved in the fact that Life, as we see it, is not a purely spiritual thing, but, be what it may, is exhibited in a material organism; and that all forms of Life should have the same physical basis does not touch the question as to what Life itself is. To say that *it* itself is the said physical basis, is to speak tautologically. Basis and that of which it is basis are not identical. We may pass over the circumstance that Stricker and other German Chemists give a somewhat different analysis of dead protoplasm, and that Beale complains of the tendency to apply the term to formed, as distinguished from forming, matter.¹ It is perhaps more to the point to remark that seeing, as Huxley admits, all we know of the composition of protoplasm is that of dead protoplasm, this can throw no real light on what living protoplasm is. The tenant has vanished from the house. Hamlet is not in Hamlet. To a lay mind it would seem to be reasonable that there must be something in the living speck which cannot come under any test to which the dead speck is subjected; and it is that mysterious something which performs the wondrous operation of converting dead sub-

The
question
concerning
Living
Protoplasm.

¹ *Bioplasm*, pp. 9-18, 73. Comp. Stirling's *As regards Protoplasm*, p. 24; *Cont. Rev.*, Sept., 1876, p. 553.

stances into living matter. The mystery of Life remains as great as ever.

There is also one difficulty which some feel in accepting the implication of this argument from the nature of protoplasm. For observe, the argument seems to proceed on the assumption that if there be such a common physical basis as described, there need not be any organizing power *sui generis*—nothing other than what is implied in the mere interaction of the chemical substances that make up the basis. Huxley says that ‘Aquosity’ is not needed to form water, and so no other ‘*ity*’ is required to account for the phenomena of Life. The peculiar interaction of certain atoms is the elective power which abstracts material from surrounding substances and causes them to become ‘living.’ Now, one solid objection to this supposition which occurs to ordinary and to some very scientific minds, is this: that the hypothesis does not sufficiently account for the diversity in the selection of surrounding substances for conversion into living matter. The protoplasmic cell of a nettle, an oak, a primrose, a cabbage; and of a fly, an elephant, and a dog, is, according to the hypothesis, of the same chemical elements, the same powers and form of action, and yet they lay hold of unlike substances to convert them into their respective living matter, and turn the matter so seized and assimilated into such diverse com-

A common physical basis compatible with a power *sui generis*.

The selective power of Life.

binations and uses. We might suppose that they, being exactly alike in composition and powers, would only assimilate the substances that were common in their respective environments. To a common-sense view of the case there certainly seems a need of an elective power that can reject and take, a power that can organize different structures out of the materials assimilated. It can scarcely be solely a question of chemical affinity, seeing that the chemical composition and powers are said to be the same in every case. It is here that we see brought out into great prominence the utter mystery there is in Life. There is nothing in Nature to compare with it in this respect. There certainly is more than an everlasting dance of atoms. Why should a germ in an egg, if it consisted only of atoms like the atoms in a nettle, in the same form and endowed with the same powers, select from the elements around it dead atoms and convert them into a wondrously constructed chicken, while the equally endowed atoms of the nettle only built up a stationary substance? And how is it that an egg when heated up to a certain point, even artificially, becomes a chick; while, when boiled, it can never become a chicken? The elements are the same in both cases. Chemistry can give no answer to the question, nor can molecular physics. Life is a mystery beyond the sciences.

But it would not be right to leave this question of protoplasm without a word on the comparison instituted between the formation of crystals and living matter. Haeckel has devoted many pages to show that as the one is the sole result of mechanical force, so the other may be and is; only the mechanical action, in the case of organisms, is hidden under chemical forms. The reasoning certainly is ingenious, but those who take another view of Life urge such considerations as these. Crystals and living things are too wide apart to be compared for the purpose in view. The one is simply added to by external contact; the other turns the external matter into its own living nature—mere contact disappears. The one is a mere aggregation from without, in rigid mathematical lines, modifiable at pleasure by the introduction of new elements into the surroundings, devoid of internal movement and absorption of new matter from without. It is, in reality, a minute pack of bricks. The other is mobile, active throughout its entire substance, moves towards other substances, transmutes them by a power very unlike mechanism into itself, and can only arise from its own kind. It is true we do not know why, in a certain crystal, the particles should always lie at a given angle in relation one to the other; but we do know that the mutual action is external, and can be varied at pleasure by the Chemist's skill. There is a singular remark of

Crystals
and Living
matter.

No essential
resem-
blance.

Lister's
remark
on the
powers of
living
structures.

Lister's, no mean authority, which though not made in reference to living matter as contrasted with crystals, serves well to indicate the enormous remove of the one from the other, and to imply, at least, the high probability of some unique power or elective agency. He says: 'We know that it is one of the chief peculiarities of living structures that they possess extraordinary powers of effecting chemical changes in the materials in their vicinity, out of all proportion to their energy as mere chemical compounds.'¹

SPONTANEOUS GENERATION.

Question
of Spon-
taneous
generation.

Hitherto we have explained and examined the proofs which the Mechanical School adduce in support of the general hypothesis said to be suggested by the Principle of Continuity, namely, that living matter, *in the first instance*, arose out of some prior condition of things—the condition of things being solely the interaction of dead matter and force. But it should be noted that there are a few ardent advocates of the hypothesis, such as Bastian, Büchner, and Haeckel, who even go so far as to assert that life *now* can be produced out of inorganic conditions. As a rule, Naturalists consider that the doctrine of Biogenesis, *ovum ex ovo*, alone applies to life now, either in the way of transmission; or renewal; or fission; or fusion. It

Forms of
Biogenesis.

¹ Quoted by Tyndall in *Fragments of Science*, p. 148.

is probable that Aristotle and Lucretius held the view that, in addition to Biogenesis, Life still occasionally sprang from non-living matter. In our own country vulgar belief, even in the year 1638, had connected the appearance of small vermin with changes in the inorganic world; and in the eighteenth century the expression 'Spontaneous Generation' was invented to indicate the nature of the change. There is much in the expression that is fascinating to a certain order of mind, and the frequency with which animal Life appears to spring in abundance from decayed matter, and in out of the way places, gives a semblance of truth to the conception. It was only natural that eager advocates for the origin of the first life from inorganic matter should desire the support of science for the doctrine of Spontaneous Generation in our own day, since, if that be established, the whole question of origin is once for all settled. It would be tedious to go into the detail of experiments that have in abundance been made to test this question. Of late years the most persistent and voluminous writer in England on the subject, Dr. Bastian, has endeavoured to show by experiments he himself has made, and others also, that, all care being taken to exclude the air and destroy existing germs in the solutions employed, distinct instances have occurred of living forms coming into existence out of purely dead inorganic matter.

Bastian's
experi-
ments.

Spontaneous
Generation
discarded.

Considering that in the judgment of the most competent scientific men in Christendom this doctrine of Spontaneous Generation is utterly discarded, it is not necessary to enter into any particulars as to methods by which it has been set aside as absurd. But, for the sake of those who may not have followed the controversy now ended, we may just point out one or two considerations and facts which justify this strong language concerning it.

Reasons for
rejecting it.

It certainly looks suspicious that Nature should be so prodigal as to break the law of Parcimony in thus having *now* two concurrent methods of originating Life—Spontaneous Generation and Life from Life. The idea of there being anything ‘Spontaneous’ in an ordered system is incredible to any one who reflects on what law and order mean. Dr. Tyndall, who of all men had no reason for objecting to the idea of Life springing from inorganic matter if possible, carried on with marvellous skill a long series of experiments of the most rigorous character, and came to the conclusion reached by others equally eminent in their department, that ‘it is unlikely that the notion of Bacterial life developed from dead dust can ever gain currency among the members of a great scientific profession.’¹ It may be interesting to be reminded of Professor Huxley’s reply to Dr.

Huxley’s
judgment
on Bastian’s
experiments.

¹ *Fragments of Science*, p. 7.

Bastian when he, Dr. Bastian, brought some of his living results from dead matter for his personal inspection. 'At any time these six months Dr. B. knows perfectly well that I believe that the organisms which he has got out of his tubes are exactly those he has put into them; that I believe he has used impure materials, and that what he imagines to have been the gradual development of life and organization in his solution is the very simple result of the settling together of the solid impurities which he was not sufficiently careful to see, in their scattered condition, when the solutions were made. He will recollect that he wrote to me, asking permission to bring for my examination certain preparations of organic structures which he declared he had clear and positive evidence to prove to have been developed in the closed digested tubes. Dr. B. will remember that when the first of these wonderful specimens was put under my microscope I told him that it was nothing but the fragment of the leaf of the common bog moss (*Sphagnum*), and he will recollect that I had to fetch Schacht's book (*Die Pflanzenzelle*), and show him a figure which fitted very well what he had under the microscope before I could get him to listen to my suggestion.'¹

If, then, on such great authority, Spontaneous Generation must be set aside, the question naturally

Bearing
of the
conclusion
on the main
question.

¹ *Nature*, Oct. 30, 1870 : comp. Vol. ii. pp. 400-403.

Haeckel's
despair.

arises, how does such a result affect the position that Life *in the first instance* sprang from the pre-existing inorganic matter? It is noticeable that Haeckel is especially sensitive on this point. He says: 'If we do not accept the hypothesis of Spontaneous Generation, then, at this one point of the history of development (*i.e.*, when life first appeared), we must have recourse to the miracle of a supernatural creation.'¹ It is only right to say that this despair on the part of Haeckel is not shared by others who are as rigid as he is in the application of the Principle of Continuity; and he himself, with strange inconsistency, in another part of the same work, refers to the probable difference in the condition of carbon and the state of the atmosphere in the remote past, as accounting for the evolution of life from inorganic matter then, and not now.² Mr. Spencer is perfectly consistent in the view he takes, while rejecting Spontaneous Generation as unscientific. He takes pains to show that there was, in his judgment, an almost interminable interaction among the primitive molecules before even compounds called organic were formed; and that ages of subtle interaction and evolution were required for the production of a definite living organism out of organic compounds purely chemical. But the moulding of these compounds, by this slow process, into the

Spencer's
view.

¹ *History of Creation*, i., p. 348.

² *Ibid.* i. pp. 330-336.

simplest types must have commenced with portions of protoplasm (*i.e.*, with making portions of protoplasm) more minute, more indefinite and inconstant in their character than the lowest speck of protoplasm in the Protista of Haeckel.¹ Professor Huxley virtually agrees with the above representation, though he will not commit himself to any definite statement as to mode and duration of the process. He states that he has no *belief* as to the *mode* in which existing forms of life have originated, but that were he able to look back 'beyond the abyss of geologically recorded time to the still more remote period when the earth was passing through physical and chemical conditions which it can no more see again than a man can recall his infancy, I should *expect* to be a witness of the Evolution of living protoplasm from *non*-living matter.'²

Huxley's position.

THE LATEST SPECULATION.

As an ingenious guess at the origin of Life from purely mechanical action of ultimate atoms and really from Spontaneous Generation in the remote past, we may here mention a speculation of the late Professor Clifford. The question is, to explain how living matter acquired its peculiarity of producing its like. It may have arisen, he says, as a

Clifford's speculation on purely mechanical lines.

¹ *Principles of Biology*, i. pp. 480-482.

² *Critiques and Addresses*, p. 239.

first step in the progress towards the development of the actual living molecules. He takes a molecule, acetelyne, formed of 2 Carbon atoms and 4 Hydrogen; and from these he gets, by an experiment, the molecule known as benzine, with its 6 Carbon and 6 Hydrogen atoms. When once the first step is taken, and the new compound is formed, 'it has the property of assisting the formation of its like,' but 'nobody knows why.' . . . 'It is impossible to disprove the statement' that benzine cannot be made out of simpler molecules without some few molecules of pre-existing benzine. There is no test delicate enough for the disproof. But it is generally held that the benzine molecule is formed by the collision of 3 acetelyne molecules in favourable positions: this collision is a *coincidence*, which in this case takes place very often in a second.¹ Having so established the idea of *coincidences*, the argument passes on to the more complex molecules which form the first living matter; and it is supposed that coincidences arise by which a living molecule is formed in the same way as benzine. But in the same article Professor Clifford admitted that were such a result attained by accidental coincidence, this would be 'far away' from a speck of protoplasm, and thousands of years of Evolution would, he says, be necessary for the passage of the one to the other. The

Accidental
coincidence
in the
remote past.

¹ *Contemporary Review*, Aug., 1888, p. 202.

reason assigned why this sort of Spontaneous Generation does not occur in our experiments is, that there is not time enough in the limits of our observations for a *coincidence* of the 'favourable position.'

If this be the last and utmost that can be said with a view to the scientific explanation of the origin of Life on purely mechanical principles, by one whose great abilities and scientific attainments were in the front rank, and whose zeal in opposing the idea of Creation of Life was intense, we may most reasonably say, in consideration of the whole case as thus presented, that no substantial evidence has yet been adduced to show that Life first originated from that which is not living. Whatever the hypothesis of the Mechanical School may be, it is not scientifically strong. The mystery of Life remains.

It is obvious that the position taken, though differently set forth, by Mr. Spencer, Professors Huxley and Clifford, is not essentially different as to the main question from that taken by those who adduce specific proofs and evidences of the origin of Life from the strictly inorganic, from either Spontaneous Generation or other, as we have seen, disputable hypotheses relating to present-day observation on the conditions and structure of organic matter. For they all three push the Principle of Continuity to what they consider its logical issue,

Such speculation weak as against belief in Creation on the basis of Revelation.

The views of Spencer, Huxley, and Clifford are essentially 'mechanical,' though not explicitly so.

and speculate as to a tedious process involving the gradual emergence of Life from the primordial atoms ; and inasmuch as the Spencerian system of Evolution makes all chemical conditions, and probably the very elements themselves, the outcome of the original kicking of ultimate units of matter one against another, it follows that Life is the outcome, in the last analysis, of a mechanical interaction of the ultimate atoms. It would be too great a work here and now to enter on an examination of, or to formulate, difficulties connected with so vast a scheme of philosophy. It should, however, be said that there are men prominent in science who think they see insuperable difficulties in accepting such a view of the origin of life. There still remains, in their judgment, the inherent difficulty of forming any rational conception of the passage from mere mechanical or chemical interactions to that marvellous elective power towards a definite end which characterises the vital phenomena. Even so great an authority on molecular physics as Professor Stokes, says in his Presidential Address before the British Association, 'Admitting to the full as highly probable, though not completely demonstrated, the applicability to living beings of the laws which have been ascertained with reference to dead matter, I feel constrained, at the same time, to admit the existence of a mysterious *something* lying beyond,

Professor Stokes on 'something lying beyond' matter and force.

a something *sui generis*, which I regard not as balancing and suspending the ordinary physical laws, but as working with them, and through them, to the attainment of a designed end.'

Thus far, then, we have seen that the Mechanical hypothesis of the origin of Life fails to account for the phenomena. There remains that '*something*' which, according to Professor Stokes, is different from, though 'working with' 'the ordinary physical laws' towards 'a designed end.' So far the Biblical doctrine of Creation of Life *de novo* holds the field.

The mechanical view untenable.

B.—THE NON-MECHANICAL SCHOOL.

It has been already pointed out that there are some, who, while rejecting the purely Mechanical view of the Origin of Life, yet, pushing the Principle of Continuity to what they conceive to be its logical issue, maintain that Life did in the first instance come from some prior condition of things, though not from mere dead matter under the action of mechanical force. The remark of Professor Stokes just quoted, touches the point of departure from those who hold to the first life being only the more definite development of pre-existing physical conditions. That in the organization of the first life there were in full force the laws which necessarily govern all material combinations is highly probable, since an organism,

Another explanation of the pre-existing conditions.

Molecular interaction in Organisms compatible with something else *sui generis*.

Definitions
of Life too
narrow.

being made up of molecules, is an embodiment of certain chemical and molecular principles; and it is this physical aspect of the case which leads some to the conclusion that the physical laws, thus embodied in a definite organism, grew to be what they are in that organism out of something physical but less definite, and that they, and the constituent atoms, are all that makes up the so-called Life. It is this view which accounts for some of the definitions of Life found in the works of Biologists, *e.g.*, 'Life is the co-ordination of actions,' 'Imperfect co-ordination is disease,' 'Arrest of co-ordination is death' (Spencer). There surely is, says Professor Stokes, not only this, but 'something beyond.' The same conception was entertained by the late Professor Stewart, who says that Life is to be regarded rather as a 'consummate strategist, who, sitting in his secret chamber over his wires, directs the movements of a great army.'¹

1. *The View of Lotze.*

Lotze's
view of the
question.

In this connexion we cannot pass over the metaphysical contribution towards the solution of the question offered by Hermann Lotze—a name justly honoured in Germany and England among those who seek to traverse the higher realms of philosophic thought. Lotze's conception of the origin and also development of Life is both 'mechanical'

¹ *Unseen Universe*, p. 145.

and not mechanical. In an Essay contributed to Wagner's *Hand-Dictionary of Physiology* he advocated the claim of the mechanical view to a place in the science of Physiology. He taught that the existence and processes of actual life and its propagation could not be understood without implying an ordered action in the particles entering into the structure — action necessitated by law. In his *Metaphysics*, published many years later, he maintains the same view, only that he guards it from inferences which appear to have been drawn from his earlier representations. He considers that the assumption of a Vital Law is not warranted, while at the same time he admits that there are no means at our command that will enable us to manufacture artificially a product which even remotely resembles a living organism. His position with reference to mechanism is thus expressed, 'I simply adhere now to the decision which I then expressed.' But then he goes on to add, 'This makes me the more sorry that Physiologists should regard this view, which embodies the necessary regulative principles of all these investigations, as being also the last word on the subject, and should exclude every idea which is not required for their immediate purposes, from all share in their ultimate conclusions. *But they will never remove from the mind of any unprejudiced person the overwhelming impression that the forms of organic life serve an end ;*

The mechanical view contains an element of truth.

Artificial production of organic compounds denied.

*nor will man ever be persuaded that this marvellous fact does not call for explanation by a special cause.'*¹

The secret lies in the directive powers of the Absolute, God.

This 'something else beyond,' or in excess of the bare mechanism of atoms, he represents as being, not a separate entity, not a collateral independent power, but 'the combining movement of the Absolute.'² This it was which originally caused, and still, in every vital change, does cause, the attainment of the ends so conspicuous in a living thing. Life, then, springs from the rational immanence of the Absolute, in such a way as to utilize universal mechanical laws to specific ends. The solution is metaphysical, but, says Lotze, it is necessitated by the inadequacy of the purely mechanical view to satisfy the reason. Life is a form of Divine action along mechanical lines.

2. *The View of Stahl.*

Other solutions.

Besides that of Lotze, three distinct solutions have been proposed of the 'something beyond' mechanical action:—

Life the outcome of the latent animation of all matter.

First, that *Matter in its ultimate condition was*, besides those peculiarities which come within the scope of physical and chemical science, *endowed by the Creator with a subtle latent quality for which no name can be found*, but which, in fact, was the germ of that peculiar manifestation

¹ *Metaphysics*, Book ii., Chap. viii, sec. 229.

² Comp. sections 230-233.

which appeared later on in the course of the evolution of matter, to which we, observing the unique characteristics of its phenomena, give the name Life. In this sense original matter would contain within itself the potentiality of all that, in the course of the evolution of Life, seems to be unaccounted for by those qualities of matter which come within the province of physical and chemical science. This was substantially the hypothesis advocated by Stahl, and perhaps would embrace the latest and inconsistent supposition of Hæckel, that all matter is *beseelt*, animated; though from his Monistic theory of the Universe he, of course, can give no rational account of such an endowment.

This speculation may be allowed to be much more reasonable than that it seeks to improve upon. It puts within the original matter, apparently by primordial Divine action, all that one wants to have there in order to escape from the crudities and irrationalities of the bare mechanical hypothesis. It claims to be scientific, in that it keeps in the strict line of Continuity; and it in a modified sense harmonises with Descartes' doctrine of Continuous Creation. The far-seeing wisdom and the wondrous power implied in such an original constitution of matter,—thus creating a complicated organic and inorganic world in germ—may perhaps satisfy some who hold to the

This is the
Evolution of
spiritualized
matter.

It maintains
absolute
Continuity.

The
speculation
not justified
by physical
science.

teaching of Revelation, that Life originally came from God, and who yet want to keep fast by the absolute interpretation of the scientific principle of Continuity. What they must surrender is belief in the literal separate origination of Life later on in the world's history. There are earnest Christian men who hold by this *Animistic* view, though the late Clerk Maxwell, as may be seen in the excellent Monograph on the subject in his *Life*, felt compelled, from his position as a physicist, to regard it as a speculation not in any way sustained by our actual knowledge of the behaviour of molecules.

3. *The View of Leibnitz.*

Leibnitz's
theory of
Monads.

A second solution of this class is that associated with the name of Leibnitz. According to him the clue to the existence of life, as also to thought, is to be found in the original constitution of the universe. Resolved into the last analysis, all things are Monads—units of being. These ultimate Monads vary in their power. Their essential nature is activity, or as we, in modern phrase, would say, using the term generally, energy. The variation of their power is a variation in degree of perception. The lowest kind of Monads are those whose perceptive activity is near zero; their sensitiveness is practically *nil*. An organism is a congeries of Monads,

Life the
expression
of original
Monadal
activity.

Life and
Perception
identified.

forming system within system. Every portion of what we call Matter is a combination virtually of lives in their most infinitesimal form. 'Every portion of matter,' he says, 'may be conceived as a garden full of plants, and as a pool stocked with fish. Moreover, every branch of the plant, and every part (*membre*) of the animal, and every drop of the liquid in the pool, is also such a garden and such a pool. . . . There is nothing crude, sterile, or dead in the universe; no chaos, no confusion, save in appearance. . . . Thus it is that each living organism has a dominant entelechie (or Monad), which is the soul in the animal, and also that each of its limbs is full of other living things, plants and animals, every one of which also has its dominant entelechie (Monad) or Soul.'¹ Taking such a view of the original constitution of things, and holding as he did the principle of Continuity, long before it was formulated by Sir W. Grove, he regarded the beginning of Life, in the first instance, as the emergence into organic form of sensitive units, that contributed each its part to the ordered action of a particular system called organism.

Organisms are assemblages of Monads under a directing Monad.

The first appearance of what is called Life was the emergence into definite sensitive-ness of a set of Monads.

Such a speculation seems to recognise Creation, in the strict sense, as once for all in the beginning of things—all afterwards being the continuous modification of the relations of the constituents

The speculation recognizes only original Creation of the Monads

¹ *Monadologie*, Paris Edition, pp. 67-70.

of the Universe, according to a Pre-established Harmony. In such a case, Life in organisms would indeed be a 'co-ordination of actions;' only the 'actions' would be those of units whose characteristic was perceptive activity more or less clear. The beginning of what *we ordinarily call Life* would be the emergence of the first and simplest aggregation of units endowed with more perceptive activity than others that had previously been aggregated; or, in other words, the first combination, into simplest co-ordination, of the smallest number of units requisite to *form a distinctively sensitive system.*

The speculation is only a metaphysical account of the Evolution of Life.

The speculation of Leibnitz was not intended by him to run counter to anything in Scripture. He believed in Creation. But he sought to explain what is referred to as distinct separate Creation of Life as being the appearance in its effects, and later on, in time, of a Creative act which had really occurred in the beginning of all things. It is a metaphysical account of Evolution on Theistic principles. It may be enough to say that it is pure speculation, and can claim no position as a sound scientific conclusion, and can scarcely weigh with those who give heed to the explicit words of Scripture.

4. *The View of Stewart and Tait.*

There is only one other solution tentatively put forward in modern times to which we need refer; it is that worked out in such an interesting way by Professors Stewart and Tait in their combined production entitled *The Unseen Universe*. Holding rigidly to the Principle of Continuity in its utmost logical application; recognising in organic structures the working of physical and chemical laws as surely and comprehensively as in the inorganic, they first of all reason up from the admitted data of physical science to the existence of an unseen universe, of which the present visible universe is the evolved outcome,—believing that to be the true logic of scientific knowledge. The visible universe expresses, and is the form of, the energy that was in its antecedent unseen universe, but not *all* that was in the unseen. In the unseen universe there was one form of energy which found its outlet in what we now know as the material visible system; and there was another ‘Agency’ which did not so find an outlet. This latter something is Life; and as the visible material world, and all that physically enters into organisms, as mere material structures, are the outcome of one form of energy, so Life in organisms, regarded as the mysterious

Speculation
of
Professors
Stewart
and Tait.

The
relation of
the *visible*
to the
unseen
universe.

A form of
energy
in the
unseen of
which Life
is the
Evolution.

Matter and
Life from
distinct
agencies
finding
their origin
in God.

Absolute
Continuity
preserved.

The
unseen
inter-
mediary is
the Logos.

strategist that seems to direct and regulate all in an organism, is the outcome of that other form of energy—the Life in the unseen. All things alike are originally from the Absolute (God) along a line of vast recession; but one line of things—the material, the visible—comes from the Absolute by means of an unseen intermediary operating in the unseen; and the other line of things—the living—comes from the Absolute (God), by means of an unseen intermediary operating also in the unseen, and designated Life. Thus, just as now Life only comes from Life, so, in the first appearance of Life on the globe, it came from the Life in and of the unseen. Thus the scientific principle of Continuity, and the scientific law of Life from Life—two fundamental doctrines of Science—are adhered to in their explanation of the first emergence of Life on earth.¹

This ingenious and reverently set forth hypothesis thus makes the anterior condition of things out of which Life evolved an unseen, super-sensible condition. It regards Life on earth as the outcome of Life in a super-sensible sphere; and the authors of the work so far fall in with Biblical ideas and terms as to speak of that original ‘intermediary,’ or ‘Life,’ as being the Logos—in whom was Life. The nature of the hypothesis, coming from such an influential source, is that it

¹ *The Unseen Universe*, Third Edition, pp. 168-189.

shows that sound scientific thinking moves in antagonism to the bare mechanical hypothesis, and must recognise in action somewhere Divine Wisdom and Power. Whether, however, this explanation of the Divine Origin of Life, on an evolutionary basis, is satisfactory, must be left to the calm judgment of thoughtful Christians. It, at all events, recognises Life as *sui generis*, and as having a beginning on Earth other than in the line of Matter and Force, and by the action of the WORD. But why should we be asked to recognise the Eternal Word as a sort of evolutionary intermediary agency? Why make the first appearance of Life virtually an *Evolution* from the Logos? That is not the Biblical idea of Creation, nor of the Eternal Son.

The Speculation does not give due honour to the Logos.

II.—THE ORIGIN OF CONSCIOUSNESS.

HITHERTO we have spoken only of Life. It remains to say a few words in reference to the emergence of Consciousness. The two are intimately connected, and it will depend largely on the views we entertain concerning their connexion, as to the explanation possible of the origin of Consciousness.

The relation of Life and Consciousness needs elucidation

THE NATURE OF CONSCIOUSNESS.

The term is very ambiguous. As used by Sir William Hamilton, it refers to the knowledge we

Ambiguous
use of the
word 'Con-
sciousness.'

Hamilton.

Reid.

Kant.

'Conscious-
ness'
possibly
equivalent
to bare
sentieney.

have, that the Ego exists in some determinate state.¹ 'It is,' he says, 'strictly undefinable,' whereas his predecessor, Reid,² employed it in the sense of a faculty which has internal states for its object. With most modern Psychologists it is taken as the ultimate appeal as to the existence of a state of mind or the reality of an object, and it is even now and then used as equivalent to assured personality. On the other hand, Kant regarded it as the phenomenal form of that *noumenon*, which is the undiscernible unity of all we know in mind. If at the present time we were concerned only with Consciousness as thus understood in certain schools of Psychology and Philosophy, we should only have to study human beings, and ascertain the conditions and causes of the emergence of Consciousness so understood in them. But using the term in its relation to Life, in the widest sense of the word 'Life,' our definition or description of it must be of wider range. If Life be regarded simply as the Organic in contradistinction from the Inorganic, then, in contradistinction from Life, Consciousness must embrace all that comes under the name of 'Sensation' or 'Feeling,' in whatever degree it exist, and whether in the highest or lowest of the Animal Kingdom. No doubt it would be easier, for purposes of scientific and

¹ *Metaphysics*, i., pp. 182-191.

² *Works* (Hamilton's Ed.), pp. 222-242.

popular treatment, to deal with the striking contrasts apparent between organic structures, as living things capable of growth, nutrition, and reproduction, and what is known as human Consciousness; but that would leave out of the discussion those elementary states in the lowliest animals which, whether called sentiency or feeling, are, in their essential features, like unto the fundamental states in the human sensitive life, out of which the higher forms of Consciousness are believed by many modern Psychologists to arise. Indeed, our more modern systems are to be widely distinguished from the same science as it was treated by the Scottish School, of which Hamilton and Reid may be regarded as the types. The Physiological aspects of mental life are more insisted on, and the full 'Consciousness' of the elder school is, by the application of an analytic process, exhibited as being an evolution from states of feeling as elementary as those which are found in animals far below man in ordinal rank. This is not to say that the interpretation of Mind by the Associationalist School is, in all respects, to be taken as adequate—far otherwise; but, as a matter of fact, it does regard our highest forms of thought—intuitions, beliefs, and self-consciousness—as a growth out of prior and more simple elements. In fact, the generic term 'feeling' is employed, for instance, by Mr. Spencer, to indicate that

Organic structure and function not one with consciousness.

The Associational School derive human consciousness from bare sentiency.

The
question is
the origin
of feeling or
sentiency in
organisms.

elementary state of bare sentiency which, by its integrations and differentiations, makes up the 'Composition of Mind,' much in the same way as the units of matter by their integrations and differentiations, in due course, evolve into the Material Cosmos. If then we would really get at the origin of Consciousness in the wider sense of the term, we shall have to ascertain, if possible, whence came that in organic beings generally which constitutes them not merely *living* but also *sentient* beings. This is the question of Consciousness in the schools of thought above referred to. The origin of Man as a Free Moral Ego is another question, though some would even affirm that that, on principles of Evolution, is merged in this.

Nervous
Structure
and
sensation
correlated.

In dealing with the question before us we must remember that, according to our modern Psychology and Physiology, the actual existence of feeling or sentiency in a living creature is conditioned by the presence in the organism of a nervous system, developed in a degree proportionate to the intensity and frequency of the feeling experienced. It is true there are differences of judgment among eminent Physiologists on this point. There is also a school of psychical inquirers who are making it a special study to trace out the earliest sign of psychical life, which would be the most elementary form of Consciousness. Some make out that traces of such life in the simplest form of Memory

begin first with the Echinoderms; while the primary instincts appear with the larvæ of insects and the Annelids, and so upwards till reason appears in the higher Crustaceans. Others make out that psychical life, *i.e.*, Consciousness, begins even with the speck of living Protoplasm. So that the general proposition of these various inquirers would be that in the lowest organisms, in which even there is no sign of an elementary ganglion, there are evidences of some degree of sensibility.¹ Be that as it may, the general view is that distinct and unquestionable sensation implies some nervous arrangement; and the manifoldness of the sensational experience will be determined chiefly by the degree to which the nerve processes are developed. Any supposed sensibility in organisms destitute of distinct nervous structure is to be explained on the same principle; *i.e.*, there is, in such cases, an incipient nerve—a condition of organic matter tending to definite structure as nerve cells.

Researches into the earliest signs of consciousness in animals.

Now, what is important for us to notice is this, that feeling, sentiency, psychical Life, or whatever word is used to indicate the thing so well known, denotes something *sui generis*. The most elementary feeling in an organism is not a motion, not a molecule, not a mechanical or chemical relation be-

The most elementary feeling is *sui generis*.

¹ *Psychic Life of Micro-organisms*, by A. Binet. For a more moderate view see *Psycho-physiologische Protestin Studien*, by Max Verworn.

There is
a gulf
between
it and
organic
matter.

Mr.
Spencer
admits the
essential
difference.

Whence
came this
strange
elementary
conscious-
ness?

tween molecules, not anything that constitutes the organism a physical thing. In its essential nature it is as different as is our sense of Free Personality. Mr. Spencer admits that the difference between the subjective thing and the objective material transcends all differences known to us. The more we look into the question the more we shall perceive that between the material organism as such, its motions and molecular modifications on the one side, and the most elementary feeling on the other, there is an impassable gulf. No tests applied to the one will avail for the other. No terms to express the one will serve to express the other. That, I say, is the great fact which has to be accounted for if possible. Whence comes this strange visitor in a physical universe? And yet there is one other fact connected with it almost as remarkable. It is this: that this strange elementary consciousness appeared for the first time in the history of the world millions and millions of years after the physical system had been in existence and in process of development. After ages of molecular interaction, and, according to some authorities, after Life, as an organic form of matter, had long been in existence, this elementary consciousness emerged—Whence?

SOME SOLUTIONS GIVEN BY PHILOSOPHY OR SCIENCE.

The Monadal Philosophy of Leibnitz solves the problem by the hypothesis that the original Monads which enter into the constitution of all things were by nature perceptive activities, more or less distinct, and in due course of Evolution, therefore, *feeling*, first, in most simple, and then in more elaborate form, would arise. This, of course, is logical, and stands or falls with the prior conception as to the original units of being.

The
answer of
Leibnitz.

This is a
practical
identifica-
tion of Life
with Con-
sciousness.

The hypothesis of the Animists, who regard all the units of matter as endowed with a *non-material* property, solves the problem by the supposition that at a certain stage in the Evolution of the original atoms this *non-material* property asserted its presence—came, as it were, to the surface. Here again the solution is logical. It spiritualises matter in the first instance, and so sees in its later development signs of the hitherto hidden property. No disproof of this position is possible; all we can do is to admit or deny the original assumption; though, as Clerk Maxwell intimates, all that physicists know of the behaviour of molecules goes against its truth.

The view
of the
Animists.

This
makes the
Evolution
of Matter
to condition
the
appearance
of Con-
sciousness
to be
practically
the same.

The speculation of Professors Stewart and Tait, as unfolded in their joint work *The Unseen Uni-*

The
'Unseen
Universe'
solution
makes all
animal con-
sciousness
an
Evolution
from the
Life of the
Logos.

verse,¹ seeks to solve the problem by taking an exceedingly comprehensive view of the term Life. It has been already pointed out that according to them the potentiality of all that now is in the visible universe, whether material or otherwise, was in the pre-existing unseen universe from which the visible is an Evolution. There was in the 'Unseen' one potentiality which stood in direct relation to all that we cover by the word Life; and as, in their view, Life embraces more than the physical processes of growth, nutrition, and reproduction, so in the 'Unseen' there was that which contained within itself an element answering to the psychical character we recognise in living things. According to this, then, consciousness in some germinal form would inhere in the lowliest forms of life, and would spring, not from the molecular interaction of the organism, as the mechanical school maintain; but would be an Evolution from something, not some things, of the same generic character, existing previously before molecules came into existence. That something is said to be the Logos. Such a theory may be held, but cannot be proved or scientifically disproved; though it does away with Creation.

The
Mechanical
School
in great
difficulty.

The Mechanical School find in the emergence of Consciousness their *cruz*. Büchner and a few of his hardy followers make use of some strong

¹ Sections 214-216, 224-236.

phrases to indicate that all that we include under the term is the sole and natural product of the bare interaction of atoms. '*Ohne Phosphor ohne Gedank*' (No thought apart from Phosphorus), is, being only a partial truth, intended to imply that Consciousness is the absolute product of Matter, as truly and in the same sense as bile is a secretion of the liver; a conclusion that ignores the essential difference between the most elementary form of Consciousness and the atom or its motions. To say that atoms by kicking one against the other, and so producing motions, and concussions, and adhesions, produce thereby also Thought or Sensation, which are neither atom, nor motion, nor interaction of atoms, but something which exhibits no single material quality, which lies beyond all material tests, affinities, and conceptions, is, in reality, to represent atomic matter as originating something utterly new—something outside the material sphere—it is, in short, to invest atomic matter with absolute creative power. Whatever may be urged in favour of the mechanical evolution of living organisms, regarded as structures of matter capable of nutrition, growth, and reproduction, the argument utterly breaks down when the origin of Consciousness is to be accounted for.

Is thought a secretion of the brain?

Utter irrationality of this view.

Although Mr. Spencer's views of the Universe are based on principles wider in range and more

Spencer's
recognition
of the
failure of
materialism
to account
for Con-
sciousness.

Conscious-
ness a
distinct
manifesta-
tion of the
Eternal
Reality.

Spencer
recognises
it as
appearing
late in
time.

congruous with the facts to be solved than what can be affirmed of Materialism, yet, among the minor considerations that have influenced him in his emphatic rejection of it must doubtless be included its utter inadequacy, in his judgment, to solve the problem before us. Amidst all his fondness for wide and frequent generalization, and in spite of the unfortunate complication and obscurity produced by his varying use of such terms as 'Force' and 'Nexus,' his main lines of thought are clear enough to one who has patience to read his works with care. His solution of the problem before us comes out incidentally in the unfolding of his theory of Evolution. He proceeds on ontological lines in his interpretation of the phenomena of the universe, which for the purposes of his philosophy he divides into two parts, material and psychical. At the back of each and as cause of each there is one and the same Eternal Reality. They are the two-faced manifestations of the Eternal Power immanent in all things and yet transcending all things. The psychical element in all lives—Consciousness—owes, then, its origin to the Supreme Source of all that is; only, be it observed, the manifestation of the Eternal Power in the form of Consciousness—*i.e.*, the emergence of Consciousness—was late in time in comparison with the manifestation in form of Material atoms and their interactions. Only when the Material evolu-

tion had reached a certain stage, the organic, did the Eternal express itself in this more spiritual form.

Now, such a view, considered in relation to actual facts, has this in its favour, that all the scientific evidence at our disposal does point to the emergence of Consciousness as a strictly new event in the course of the changes undergone by the Universe. Though he shuns the term, it was, in fact, the Creation of a new factor to enter upon a course of evolution correlated with the material evolution already in progress. It is significant that the fact of Creation is thus virtually conceded, though the time and circumstances in which it took place are points on which much difference of judgment may arise: its origin for the first time in the history of the world, by the Author of all things, is the point to which most importance is to be attached, and to which, in opposition to all mere theories of mechanical interaction, all true research thus seems to tend.

It is
virtually a
Creation.

Whether, then, we take Life as simply meaning an organism capable of growth, nutrition, and reproduction, *i.e.*, as exclusive of Consciousness; or whether we regard it as something embracing, in its true sense, Consciousness also, the result is manifest, that neither Philosophy nor Science can show its origin apart from the Creative act of God. 'Of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things.'¹

The result.

Life and
Conscious-
ness are
created.

¹ Rom. xi. 36.

Thus the Bible comes to help us in our amazement at the mystery of Life. While we feel utterly unable, by mere human research, to solve either its nature or origin, and while all modern theories are conspicuous in their failure to even touch the main point at issue, the Bible teaches in clear and definite language that Life is due directly to the Creative act of God. This is the only account that takes all the facts into consideration. Revelation comes in where Reason and Philosophy and Science all fail. Modern speculation has done nothing to remove the need for, or to impair the force of, the old teaching: 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made. In Him was Life; and the Life was the light of men.'¹

• John i. 1-4.



THE INFLUENCE
OF THE
CHRISTIAN RELIGION IN HISTORY
BY
T. E. SLATER

Argument of the Tract.

I.—*The Preserving and Progressive Power of Christianity.*

RELIGION is to be judged by its effects, and must have a well-defined history. The world practically another world since Christ lived and taught in it. Underlying ideas—the redemption of the individual, and the embodiment of brotherly love in all social relationships. Other agencies in producing modern civilisation not denied. 1. Christianity a conserving and stimulating principle: (a) stimulating thought; (b) creating fresh studies and sciences; (c) its influence on the fine arts; (d) on industrial pursuits, on modern political economy; (e) its assimilating power. 2. Its relation to progress. The only religion not subverted by civilisation. No growth of society in Turkey or in India. Mohammedan civilisation. The natural virtues of the Germanic nations. The regenerating power of Christianity the guarantee for permanence. 3. Christianity and morals. The change wrought on ancient Roman society and on the moral life of the world. Admissions of eminent writers. The slowness of its operation explained. ‘The crimes of Christianity.’ The religion of Christ to be distinguished from the official church. 4. Rightly interpreted and applied, it is the ‘Religion of Humanity,’ offering the true solution of all the social problems of life. 5. The ‘kingdom of God,’ the centre and aim of all history. The apologia of Christian missions.

II.—*The Social and Reforming Power of Christianity.*

1. Influence on the Pagan world: (a) suitability of Palestine to be the cradle of the new influences; (b) influence of Christianity on the Roman empire; (c) the decay of faith and morals in the Roman empire; (d) the decay of the State. 2. The new conceptions (a) of God, and (b) of man given by Christ that have tended to reform the world; (c) antiquity did not recognise humanity; (d) the gospel an evidence of the worth and dignity of man; (e) the true school of spiritual freedom and social reform is founded on the Christian idea of personality; (f) in the ancient world everything was based on authority. The sense of responsibility to Christ the source of civil and religious liberty. How the new Faith has affected political relations. Influence of the Stoical philosophy and of the Teutonic character. 3. How family life has been changed by Christ. What He did for (a) children and for (b) woman; (c) marriage in the ancient and modern world. 4. Christianity and social life. Relation to (a) slavery and the dignity of labour; (b) to revengeful passions and personal feuds; ordeals; (c) war; chivalry. 5. A distinct Christian influence shown in the laws that have shaped the civilisation of Europe. The victories achieved are silent and unpublished, won first in the individual heart, and seen later in the disappearance of social abuses and the gradual growth of moral sentiments.

THE INFLUENCE

OF THE

CHRISTIAN RELIGION IN HISTORY.¹



I.

ITS PRESERVING AND PROGRESSIVE POWER.

‘Every good tree bringeth forth good fruit.’

MATT. vii. 17.



RELIGION, like everything else, is to be judged by its effects. What moral discipline, what type of character has it produced? Does it develop manhood?

Religion
to be
judged by
its effects

Has it restrained human passion and selfishness? Has it purified and ennobled the life of the home? Has it been fruitful and beneficent in its influence on social and political institutions? Has it con-

¹ In connection with this subject the reader is referred, in particular, to the following works:—*The Social Results of Early Christianity*, by C. Schmidt (Isbister, London); *Christian Ethics* (Social), by Bishop Martensen (T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh); *Gesta Christi*, by C. L. Brace (Hodder & Stoughton, London); *The Divine Origin of Christianity*, by R. S. Storrs, D.D., LL.D. (same publishers); *Religion in History and in the Life of To-Day*, by A. M. Fairbairn, D.D. (same publishers); *Christianity and Social Life* (Macniven & Wallace, Edinburgh).

tributed to human freedom and happiness? What educational force has it exerted? What literature, arts, and sciences have sprung from it? Has it been a friend to progress and civilisation? In short, what history has it; and to what extent is that history being realised in the public life of the world?

Its history
must be
well-defined.

It is to these well-defined historical *effects* of Christ's religion that attention is now invited. This is 'a realistic form of evidence,' and one that each may test and measure for himself. What we have to do is simply to study history, and to look at what is passing before our eyes. And as we look at Christianity, shall we not see standing out in the very forefront two most important principles? Have we not presented to our notice, first, the great fact of the forgiveness and redemption of the individual man from the guilt of sin, through the death of the Founder of the Christian religion?

In the next place, do we not see that brotherly love enters into all social relationships through the teaching of Jesus Christ, the great Master-Teacher, and the embodiment of His Father's love to men? Are not these the two fundamental principles which underlie all the moral and social powers that Christ has on the world? We can look further, and find that Christianity exercises upon an individual, who truly accepts its teaching, a reforming and purifying power, enabling him to overcome

his own evil self and to rise to higher and nobler things. We find that its purifying, ennobling, and uniting influence is seen exerting itself, notwithstanding all opposing tendencies, upon communities where its teaching is accepted. We find that it goes hand in hand with progress, and with the cultivation of all that is best in human nature—virtue and benevolence, domestic happiness and social order; with art, literature, science, and industry; that it does not crush patriotism, but develops it. We find altogether new elements introduced into history; that the world is practically another world since Christ lived and taught in it; and that every nation that sits at His feet rises into higher social, moral, and spiritual life. Have we not here evidences of a power which, as reasonable and responsible beings, we must acknowledge to have produced that which no other religion has produced, and which, therefore, must be the power of a religion given by God Himself?

The world a new world since the advent of Christ.

On the other hand, where such effects are wanting; when a religion will not work; when it breaks down on being applied to individual and social life; then, however elaborate may be its philosophy or its ritual, it can have but little claim on the allegiance of a progressive world.

But perhaps it will be said, you are crediting Christianity with much that is due to other causes: other agencies have been at work in producing

The effect
of other
agencies in
civilisation
is fully
admitted.

what is called modern civilisation. Now there is no need to strain the argument, or to import into it what does not properly belong to it. In fact, it must be admitted that, in what are called the "Dark Ages," Christianity, though always in itself a power for good, yet, through the failure of those who professed it to catch and exhibit its true spirit, did not use its mighty power of benefiting mankind as it might and should have done. It is further admitted that Christianity has not been the only agent in bringing about the beneficent results referred to. Much is of course due to the experiments made in the ancient civilisations; to the sterling qualities of certain modern nations; and to a natural tendency in the race to progress. But it is not a small matter if it can be shown that the Christian religion has *preserved* to the modern world the best elements of the ancient: that though it may not always have created, it has developed national capacities, and been a wonderfully *stimulating force* in the realms of thought and action: that it has always been the *friend of progress*, notwithstanding the weaknesses and mistakes that have often marked the history of the Church.

CHRISTIANITY A CONSERVING AND STIMULATING FORCE.

1. To be a *conserving principle* in the midst of decline and decay is to be an immense blessing to

the race. And there is not a single element of any worth in the old civilisations that Christianity has not preserved and turned to more profitable account. Though not of course its chief office, yet it is a fact that the Christian Church has been the foremost institution for preserving the literature of the ancient world, and with it the knowledge of all that was worth preserving; while the Faith itself has stimulated thought, and given to literature a range of human interests entirely unexplored before; the pen giving place to the printing press through the desire to multiply the records of the Faith.

Christianity has preserved all the good in old civilisations.

It is sometimes urged that the period of history, known as the Renaissance, or 'the revival of letters,' had more to do with the formation of modern Europe than Christianity had. But this pagan revival, which found the cities of Italy vigorous and free, left them 'the poorest and most reactionary:' and it was not till the spirit which aroused the revival of learning in the fifteenth century had been permeated by that of religious conviction, as it did in Wycliffe, and at Florence under Savonarola, that it produced men who aimed at freeing the mind from the bonds of the scholastic system, and at making real Christianity the basis of the civilisation of the future.

Influence of the Renaissance.

(a) The Christian Faith thus *stimulated thought*, by taking the form of a Book-religion—'a lettered faith'—which, with its imperial themes of

Christianity a stimulating principle.

God, duty, and immortality, with its direct Divine revelation of unseen realities, made not only through Paul's splendid dialectic, and John's marvellous intuition, but above all by the Son of God Himself, necessarily addresses the thought-power in man, and stimulates the mental faculties as well as the moral sensibilities of its disciples.

Other nations, it is true, have their sacred writings; but in most cases the original documents are few, and cover no long stretches of time; whereas those of the Bible form an extended literature of great variety—histories, biographies, prophecies, hymns, precepts, doctrines, discourses, letters—written by different authors, in different times and tongues, during a period of over one thousand years, with a freshness of perception, and a marked ‘modernness of tone,’ and all organically connected, part with part, thus forming a grand collective whole. These writings, by reason of their vast suggestiveness and the impulse that they give to keen inquiry in many new directions, have an abiding interest, an equal attraction, wherever they are carried; enriching and refining the languages and dialects into which they are translated, thus raising the ruder minds into fellowship with the higher; and developing and training what has been called an energetic ‘middle-class mind,’ unknown under the old religions, strong in conviction and active sympathies; and so

diffusing intelligence and moral forces; whereas the other sacred books of the world are confessedly uninviting except to the trained scholar and laborious student.

(b) Further: while the subsequent additions to the sacred books of the East are not so much active personal researches in the field of thought, as dry commentaries on the original texts, the Bible, with its literature, history, and exalted themes, sends the intellect forth into the most varied fields of human activity, to *cultivate fresh studies and sciences*, and to blossom forth into practical fruitfulness. The theologian, has elucidated the Divine mysteries of revelation. Great preachers have sprung up in the Church—and religious eloquence is unquestionably the offspring of Christianity. Expositors and interpreters have contributed their literary labours. Historians have unfolded the progress of the Faith. Explorers have made the lands of the Bible to be familiar. Translators have given the Scriptures generously to other tongues—a work peculiar to Christianity—and in so doing, have brought many unknown languages to light, and given a wonderful impulse to linguistic studies. Ethical jurists, philosophers, poets, men of science, and authors have arisen in all departments of literature. Popular education in schools and universities has been established. These are some of the intellectual forces of the

Cultivated
fresh
studies and
science.

Christian Faith, some of the new forms in which the mental and moral inspiration given by Jesus Christ has been exhibited before the world. The Christian religion, it has been said, 'furnishes the matrix out of which genius may be expected plenteously to spring.' Take away from modern civilisation what has been done for it in all fields of research and endeavour by scholars and other scientific men, in Christian countries, and scarcely anything memorable would be left.

Its
influence on
the fine arts.

(c) In the *fine arts*, also, Christianity may be said to have almost *created a new world*; correcting the immoral and base, and inspiring the mind with new conceptions, born of those new human relations, and of that new hope of immortality, which Christ proclaimed. The distinction based on different views of the ideal of humanity, of the nature and destiny of man, arising out of differing ideas of God, is the distinction between ancient and Christian art,¹ and appears pre-eminently in poetry—compare Æschylus and Shakespeare—where man and human life attain

¹ The germs of Christian art, which afterwards broke out into æsthetic beauty in the marbles, mosaics, and colours of the churches and cathedrals of Western and Central Europe, with their Gothic columns, vaults, and spires, all heavenward pointing, are to be seen depicted by the imprisoned church on the walls of the catacombs of Rome. The stimulated soul touched the brain of architect and musician, and guided the hand of sculptor and painter; and the world's **master-pieces** in stone, canvas, and music were born.

their most perfect representation. A corresponding contrast is seen in science, which has received a new development; for the relation of man to God, the world, and self, has been greatly changed by Christianity, which, by breaking through the limitations of the ancient world, led to the free movements of science in all directions.

(d) Further, by *dignifying labour*, and by quickening the enthusiasm for *peaceful pursuits*, the religion of Christ has greatly encouraged mechanical invention and the industrial arts: while, by increasing human sympathy, and struggling against human selfishness, it has given the impulse to the conceptions lying at the basis of true political economy; by which men are taught to recognise the great rights of all men and nations as being under the rule of one God.

Christianity
dignifies
labour.

(e) And so, in other departments of human thought and action, this religion has been not only a conserving, but a wonderfully stimulating and inspiring element: 'the source,' as the late Dean Church says, 'from which improvement derived its principle and its motives.'¹ It came, 'in the fulness of time,' to a world prepared for it by the energies and fortunes of various nations. What ever was found worthy received its baptism and benediction, and has been handed down, chastened and improved, to succeeding generations. It has

Its
assimilating
power.

¹ *Influences of Christianity upon National Character*, p. 138.

made every race and people that embraced it *contribute something to its growth*.¹ The polished Greek, the meditative Asiatic, the practical Roman, the lively Kelt, the brave Teuton, accepted the same Faith, but did not thereby become denationalised : on the contrary, they became richer in their national life ; while each did something to mould a plastic Christianity according to local genius, and to bring out some fresh feature of the Faith.

CHRISTIANITY AN INFLUENCE FOR PROGRESS.

Christianity
lives in
progress.

2. In relation to *progress*, it need hardly be said that it is the very element in which the Christian religion lives. Progress towards an end divinely contemplated—towards an ultimate goal in history—this forms the essential contrast between the pagan and the Christian view of life. The old Hebrew nation, out of which Christianity was born, was a nation of prophecy and promise, ever looking forward to the Messiah who was to come ; a nation, therefore, that cherished a confident belief in a brilliant and happy future for mankind. And since the Christ has come, fulfilling past expectation, and awakening still higher aspiration

¹ It may be regarded as an argument for the divine life of Christianity that it has been able to assimilate so much that was at first alien to it, as it is also an argument for the truth of much of that which has been assimilated (see Hatch's *Hibbert Lectures*, p. 350).

and hope, the path of His religion has been the path of progress.

It is a significant fact that outside of Christendom there is no high and progressive civilisation, no growth of society and government. Look at Turkey in Europe, where both are fixed and crystallised by a religious law that makes the people a nation of fatalists, and renders the constitution incapable of adapting itself to changing environment.

No
progressive
civilisation
out of Chris-
tianity.

e.g. In
Turkey.

The old civilisations, great as they were in some respects, carried in them the seeds of decay. Neither they nor their faiths contained the principle that could adapt itself to all time, and so, sooner or later, they enter the stage of retrogression. They have had nothing in common with the intellectual, social, and moral progress of the modern world. The law of righteousness, and the sense of responsibility in the use of power for the common good, were absent; and with no more stable basis than that of changing wills, there has been no guarantee for strength and permanence. Advancing civilisation destroys the ancient religions, or compels them to repair and reform themselves, which often means much the same as destruction. And so we find, in old Greece and Rome, and in India to-day, that the changes of social life—the new ideas, wants, and aspirations, that are born of a progressive civilisation—subject the old religions to the most

And in
India.

Contrast
between
Islam and
Christianity.

searching trial. 'There is but one example of a religion,' says Mr. Lecky, 'which is not naturally weakened by civilisation, and that example is Christianity.'¹ There is an old Turkish proverb which declares that Islam can flourish only where the palm tree grows: but there is no such legend of the gospel; it will grow in every soil. Guided by principles of action that are in their essence eternal—not by positive enactments that depend upon society—and inspired by a transcendent spirit, it carries itself readily from century to century, and from climate to climate; and with amazing flexibility it has the power of adapting itself to every variety of circumstance and every state of mind.

Influence of
civilisation
and
Christianity
not
identical.

It is not affirmed that the influence of civilisation and the influence of Christianity are identical; that there are not other agencies at work, such as colonisation, international intercourse, trade, science, and general education; but it is a fact that the highest civilisation and Christianity co-exist; and that the religion of Christ, in its purest and freest form, is the religion of civilisation—the soul of all real progress. And a Faith that shall completely satisfy the universal needs of men—the needs of the individual, society, and the race—must have a vital energy, commensurate with all conceivable human progress.

¹ *History of Rationalism in Europe* (1863), vol. I., p. 336.

Perhaps we shall be reminded that the early conquests of Mohammedan arms created a civilisation. Yes; but one that really lacks some of the first elements of true civilised life—respect for woman, and regard for liberty. Hence it is that Turkey and other countries have remained out of the march of human progress. It is Christianity that preaches the natural equality of all men, and confers rights on the weak and the enslaved; and it is only in Christian countries that this doctrine has exercised a practical influence on legislation and social life.

Mohammedan civilisation.

We are aware that this fact is sometimes explained on the ground of differences of race. Freedom and reverence for woman, it is said, ran in the blood of the Teutonic nations before Christianity touched them. Quite true; but here, again, it is claimed for this religion that it *cherished and elevated* the natural virtues and purer habits of these races, and saved them from the degeneracy that overtook the Roman world; while it curbed and subdued, as nothing else could, the native wildness and vices of the Gothic tribes. It was not the fresh infusion of German and Keltic blood alone that renovated the world at that time; for these races were, at the best, cruel and revengeful, not much alive to justice, and strangers to the idea of humanity; and if they had been left to themselves, they would have overwhelmed Roman

The natural virtues of the Germanic races.

civilisation, or have been themselves destroyed. The advance of mankind at that crisis depended on two factors—a new race as a fruitful soil, and a new Faith to act as seed, and to be a conserving and purifying power.

Our position then is this: that while the earlier civilisations, race instincts, and other influences have undoubtedly been factors in the great work of civilising the West, the religion of Christ has been the preserving and controlling force, and has done for civilisation—for intellectual and moral progress—what no other known power has done. The Cross heads, and has for centuries headed, the noblest movements of the race. As Mr. Gladstone has observed: ‘Christendom is at this moment undeniably the prime and central power of the world, and still bears, written upon its front, the mission to subdue it. In point of force and onward impulsion, it stands without a rival, while every other widely spread religion is in decline.’¹

The Cross
heads
the noblest
movements
of the race.

Other forces have their place and their results; but they lack that essential *regenerating* power which the Christian faith supplies, and which is the only guarantee for permanence.

The
regenerating
power of
Christianity
the only
guarantee of
permanence.

CHRISTIANITY AND MORALS.

3. And though it is not so much the moral as the social side of Christianity to which attention is

¹ *The Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture*, p. 104.

invited now, yet no student of history need be reminded that the effect of the Christian religion on the *moral life* of mankind is by far its greatest and most wonderful achievement. Only consider for a moment the moral state of the world, and of that particular part of the world first influenced by it, when Christianity appeared. Egoism, in its most disgraceful form, was the root of ancient morality. To know what the old civilisation had come to—the poisonous, festering corruption that prevailed—we have only to recall the Temple of Aphrodite at Corinth, or the Roman theatre, or to read the epistle that Paul wrote to the Roman Christians, especially the first three chapters. It has been said that no periods of licentiousness ‘have approached in utter and shameless sensuality the period of the Roman empire when the new religion began to be preached in it.’ And all this was a natural development in the society then foremost in the world. Juvenal has borne a terrible testimony in these well-known words: ‘There will be nothing further which posterity may add to our evil manners; those coming after can only reproduce our desires and deeds. Every vice stands already at its topmost summit.’¹

Effect of Christianity on the moral life considered.

The morality of the Roman empire.

Juvenal's testimony.

¹ *Sat.* i. 147-9. Mr. Anthony Trollope's *Life of Cicero*—gives some glimpse of the real state of the Roman world before the time of Christ—see vol. i., pp. 80-174. But Cicero himself, and Juvenal and Tacitus, and other eminent men, rose as splendid exceptions above general pagan society: and

This testimony has been translated by the late Matthew Arnold into modern verse:—

‘On that hard pagan world, disgust
And secret loathing fell.
Deep weariness and sated lust
Made human life a hell.’¹

Philosophy
powerless to
improve it.

Philosophy, too, though it did far more for morals than religion did, stood powerless against such appalling demoralisation. But there came, as a pure and gentle spirit, that new young Faith from the East which poured into the turbid stream its sweet, strong current of quickening and transforming life. It came pure as the light, tolerating no evil, searching the secrets of the soul; enforcing, first of all, the old sublime moral law of the Decalogue, and then portraying a perfect, sinless character in Christ, the Divine Son; and giving to men a new motive for a moral life in love to God through the exhibition of His great love to them, and in love to man as a consequence; thereby making conscience and character the essential things in the religion that was to be. Men and monarchs, lawless and lustful, naturally rose up against it in malicious fury, and against the peaceful Christian communities; and savage

the conversion of so many to Christianity affords ample proof of the presence of souls seeking after better things. *Conscience* tried to make her voice heard, but the prevailing religions gave her no support.

¹ *Obermann Once More*, Matt. Arnold's Poems, vol. i., p. 301 (1881).

cruelties and awful deaths were inflicted on them. But still they grew ; and the blood of martyrs was the seed of a glorious harvest. If we would know the charges brought against those early believers, we have only to read the familiar passage in which the younger Pliny gives Trajan an account of the character of the Christians in his province of Bithynia. 'They affirmed the whole of their guilt, or their error was, that they met on a stated day before it was light, and addressed a form of prayer to Christ, as to a divinity, binding themselves by a solemn oath, not for the purposes of any wicked design, but never to commit any fraud, theft, or adultery, never to falsify their word, nor deny a trust when they should be called upon to deliver it up.'¹

Pliny's
testimony
to Chris-
tianity.

That is the independent testimony of an impartial Roman statesman, as to what Christianity aimed at, and was practically exhibited in the life and worship of the Christians of his day.²

The Christian Church was from the first recognised as a great institution for teaching and enforcing a pure morality ; whereas the ancient

Christianity
the great
teacher of
pure
morality.

¹ Pliny's Letters, Melmoth's Translation (Bohn's Classical Series), Letter 97, p. 395.

² So sterling was their character that the emperors themselves came to trust Christians rather than their own co-religionists ; and even before the triumph of the Church, they were found 'more useful than the pagans to the Republic, which was better protected by the strength of charity than by strength of arms.' (See Schmidt's *Social Results of Early Christianity*, pp. 181-185, 2nd ed.)

fear no evil: for Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff, they comfort me.

Satisfaction
and rest.

(d) *Satisfaction and rest of soul.* No higher or better portion can even be conceived than that which comes to us by Christ. Our relation to God is the closest that can be. Our inheritance is the best and the largest—"The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance, and of my cup" (Psa. xvi. 5). Our difficulty lies in realizing all to which we receive a claim. The smallness of our capacity, the stiffness of our faculties, the dullness of our hearts, the worldliness of our feelings, may all distress us, but not the smallness of our heritage. That heritage leaves no reasonable desire unsatisfied. While others sigh that all is vanity and vexation of spirit, the hearts of God's children delight themselves in fatness. Others are jaded and weary: they renew their youth like the eagle. Others feel that there is nothing worth having: they say, "Whom have I in heaven but Thee, and there is none on the earth that I desire beside Thee; my heart and my flesh faileth, but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever" (Psa. lxxiii. 25, 26).

Enjoyment
in nature
and life.

(e) *New enjoyment in nature and in life.* Nature has a new aspect and a new interest for those who know God, and love Him as their Friend and Father. It is not only the work of His hands, it is the utterance of His mind and the revelation of His heart. Its mountains are symbols of the stability

of His love. Its streams represent the perpetual current of His goodness. The sun shows Him brightening, warming, fertilizing, beautifying all. The silver dawn and the golden sunset foreshadow a life in which the bright hope and joyousness of youth are united with the tranquillity and mature joys of age. And as nature thus becomes full of new beauty and glory, so ordinary life is wonderfully enriched and sweetened. God "blesseth the habitation of the just" (Prov. iii. 33). Daily bread is sweeter when it comes from His hands. All the blessings and enjoyments of domestic and social life become better when they are no longer rivals to God Himself, or regarded as the chief good, but when they are received from Him, in addition to His unspeakable gift, to increase the sum of daily enjoyment. The resources of art and learning, the treasures of literature and science, the amenities of social intercourse, have a new zest and satisfaction when crowned by the blessing of God. The thorny wilderness is changed into a smiling garden; for "wisdom's ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace" (Prov. iii. 17).

Symbolism
of nature.

Let us add a word respecting that exercise of soul—prayer—by which its fellowship with God is chiefly maintained.

The
privilege of
prayer.

To have intercourse with heaven is always elevating; to maintain the habit as a daily exercise, if only it be devoutly carried out, if it be prayer in

Supreme
influence of
Christianity
seen only
in those
who are
personally
renewed.

himself reminds us, that the supreme influence of Christianity is seen only in those who are *personally and spiritually renewed*; and therefore its full power on society could only be demonstrated if all the individuals that compose it were to imbibe its spirit, and yield to its holy attraction.

Hence
slowness
of its
operations.

And this explains the *comparative slowness* of its operations. A faith so high has to contend with ignorance and selfishness; and has had to wait, like other influences, till men were ready and willing to receive it. The leaven of Christianity requires time to work, and in its operation has been met by even aggravated forms of the evils it has had to encounter. Even now, the Church and the world are only beginning to understand what the religion of Christ really is. For it must also be acknowledged that professed Christians have not always been true to the genius and Founder of the Faith.

The
so-called
crimes of
Christianity.

The grossest evils—what have been called ‘the crimes of Christianity’—have been connected with its propagation. Sectarian bigotry, ecclesiastical pride and jealousy, anti-social ideas fostered by sacerdotalism, theological intolerance and persecution, blind obstruction to science, cruelty and bloodshed, have at times marked and stained its history. But human passion and infirmity may pervert the highest principles. Failure and crime may have been associated with Christianity, as they were in Philip II. in the Low Countries, and in Louis XIV.

in the South of France; but we cannot infer its true character from its abuses. Jesus Christ and His religion are no more responsible for the wrongs and follies that have been committed in their name than the medical profession is responsible for deaths by poison. Neither are they in any way connected with those peculiar vices that seem to be fostered by the material prosperity arising out of the civilisation that has been promoted by Christianity. All these evils have occurred not because men were Christians, but because they were *not* Christians at all in any real sense.

We must separate the proper effects peculiar to Christianity from what is common to human weakness and corruption; the force from the natural imperfection of the instruments through which it acts; we must distinguish between the seed sown and the nature of the soil on which it depends for its productiveness and which conditions and limits for long years the growth and fruitage of the 'tender plant'; between the tares and the wheat; and it will then be seen that true Christianity or the gospel,—in distinction from Christendom or from the influences of the official 'Church'—means *the religion that was taught by Christ*; the religion that aims at making the Sermon on the Mount the practical faith and living practice of mankind. That teaching, and the Divine life that embodied it, and the atonement wrought out on the Cross,

The religion of Christ to be distinguished from the official Church

have taught men the beauty and glory of living for others; have given new sacredness to human life; have greatly lessened the miseries of existence; have inculcated universal justice and charity; have befriended the poor and weak; dignified labour; exalted womanhood; modified war; and are now doing their best to perfect the relations between man and man, and nation and nation. These are some of the special and beneficent effects that have followed the introduction of Christianity into the world, and by which it waits to be judged.

CHRISTIANITY AND HUMAN INTERESTS.

Christ's
interest in
temporal
and social
matters.

4. No one can follow Christ through His earthly ministry without marking how keenly alive He was to all temporal and social interests, and how the amelioration of human ills and miseries in all their forms constituted the burden of His life. And the same spirit of humanity and charity was one of the earliest fruits of the new Faith. All, without any distinction, who were needy and unhappy—the widow and the orphan, the sick and the leprous, the captive and the oppressed, the stranger and the enemy—were the objects of active, helpful benevolence in the early Church. The beauty of Christian piety blossomed out into numberless charitable institutions before unknown; and the Church claimed as one of her greatest privileges, the right of caring for the suffering part of society,

and changing misery into happiness. And the battle of the present age is not speculative, but social; the crucial test of knowledge is its social power.

Christianity, thus rightly interpreted, is the 'Religion of Humanity,' is the true 'Service of Man:' presenting an idea of humanity—first, the redemption of the individual in Christ, and then a family loved by God—far grander than the humanity of Comte, which is only a collection of atoms, without a living head: being in warm sympathy with every true human interest, and nourishing every right endeavour and aspiration, whether intellectual, social, or political: sweetening and softening whatever is harsh and hard in the relations of men to one another; and destroying social and political evils in the same way as it destroys moral evil. In short, the elevation of *society*, and the redemption of the whole of the earthly life through the salvation of the individual, is to be included in the 'saving plan'; and it is because politics, science, commerce, industry, art, and learning, have each a side true to our humanity, that they have an aspect which allies them to Christianity.

Christianity
rightly
interpreted
is the
'Religion of
Humanity.'

THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

5. And that Christianity should be regarded in this wider sense, as the religion of humanity, influencing all our intellectual, social, and national

Christ came to establish a spiritual kingdom on earth.

life, is evident from the *name* that Christ Himself gave to His religion. He called it 'the gospel of the kingdom of God,' and made it the main subject of His discourses and parables; the glad news of a kingdom of Divine order, love, and righteousness, which was to bless mankind; and that is a *social* idea—more comprehensive and older than 'the Church'—in which God the Father is King, and men, His sons, are fellow-citizens; a vast spiritual commonwealth in which Divine and beneficent laws are everywhere to rule, and mutual love and good-will are to reign—a Divine *society*; a 'kingdom of heaven,' as opposed to the kingdoms of the earth, which are for the most part founded in pride and selfishness, built on force and upheld by oppression; and into alliance with which imperial Rome and sacerdotal Judæa too early brought the Church of Christ. This was the Kingdom or State which Christ came to establish upon earth—a kingdom of the truth to be realised in conscience—an ideal ever in process of realisation. And if we were discussing the subject from that point of view, we might show how much the Church as a society has influenced the world.

Contrast of Christianity with ideas of Plato and Confucius.

The ideal society portrayed in the *Republic* of Plato was a noble scheme to realise on earth the principles of Divine order; and so was the 'Divine kingdom' that Confucius sought to establish in China; but to Plato and to Confucius the State

was supreme; whereas from the Christian standpoint, it is but one part of that larger society which embraces alike the life of the individual, the family, the nation, and the race.

By the implanting of a new life—even Christ's own Divine life—in the hearts of men, the kingdom is to advance: not by the violent overthrow of existing institutions and governments, but as a silent influence from within; imparting to society a new character; permeating its various spheres of thought and action with a new principle; making men better and happier in all their relations.

The kingdom advanced by the implanting of a new life.

This is the ultimate aim and end towards which all progress is tending. It is the grandest hope that has ever been taught respecting the future of mankind on earth. There is nothing so elevating as to believe in this kingdom of God—the centre and aim of all history: to believe that goodness is stronger than evil; that love is mightier than selfishness; that God's own order will eventually triumph over all disorder. In the early days of Christianity we find that there were various and conflicting sects and nationalities included under the name Jews and Gentiles; but men who had been Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes, and Hellenists, and converts from the various races—Greeks, Romans, Ethiopians, Scythians, and peoples of Asia Minor—from freemen and slaves, all these were knit together into one fellowship as symbolised in the *agape*;

The elevating character of belief in this kingdom.

the conflicting races, previously divided, were made one in Christ. 'Justice is impossible,' Augustine said, 'where charity does not rule;' and the *whole* of Christ's religion is comprised in the law of universal *love*; just as the soul of the universe is love. This is the true Faith to live by, the noblest inspiration, the only bond of union.

Christianity
the true
solution
of all the
social
problems
of life.

And this is the kingdom which men are unconsciously seeking. Underneath the wild cries and moans of the outcasts of the great cities and empires of the world; underneath those terrible names that so often frighten men — Socialism, Democracy, Republicanism — there lies hidden, amidst so much that is to be deprecated in the attempt to realise it, that yearning for freedom and fraternity which can only be safely, surely realised in this kingdom of God. Jesus Christ stands over against every need of our nature—the Saviour and the Friend of man; the champion of the oppressed; the inspirer of every scheme of benevolence and progress; the solver of all social problems; the world's hope and promise.

Christianity
embodies
brotherly
love in
all social re-
lationships.

This is Christianity's grand apology; that which demonstrates its Divine origin; and that which ensures its future in the world. It is a great moral and social force; and as such can be successfully applied to all the stern facts of our modern civilisation. It is still 'young as the morning,' full of perennial freshness and unwasted

power; carrying within it, in time of declension, a self-correcting energy, suggestive of infinite improvement. It can infuse new life and vigour into the most ancient institutions, if they can prove their fitness to survive; and can regenerate society in every land. The wonderful influence of Christian Missions—the world-subduing Christianity of deed—in every quarter of the globe, is its own best apology. In carrying the Christian attack into foreign ground, we best defend and justify the Faith of the Church at home, as Italy of old was saved from Hannibal by taking the war across into Africa. The best defenders of the Faith, the most conclusive evidences of Christianity, are tamed and enlightened savages and converted Hindus and Chinese, whose transformation of character proves the spiritual efficacy of the gospel. The most prominent bulwarks of our religion are those Native Churches in heathen lands that have been won to the Christian side.¹

Work
of foreign
missions
best
apology for
Christianity.

¹ Christians in India now form a large and growing community, rapidly advancing in intelligence and influence, and being recognised as a power in the land, its members already occupying some of the highest civic posts. In point of education, they stand second only to Brahmans, and in female education are far in advance of any other section of the community. The life-giving power of Christ's religion has affected deeply their spiritual and social relations. India is entering on a new era of mental and moral awakening and transformation through the quickening ideas of Christianity. The new Faith is steadily taking the place of the decaying systems of heathenism. Missions, according to the testimony

II.

ITS SOCIAL AND REFORMING ACHIEVEMENTS.

THE main purpose of the preceding discussion was to show that in judging of a religion, the great question to ask is, What can history show that it has *done* for man? and that history would be searched in vain for any other energy that has exercised such an elevating influence on the individual, social, and national life of the world, as Christ's religion, for any force that has been so efficient in promoting the welfare and progress of mankind. The existence of other forces working with the new Faith was not denied; but it was affirmed that the religion of Jesus had supplied the greatest help the world has seen, to right living, and towards a more perfect state of society.

Proof that Christianity has supplied the greatest help the world has seen to right living.

The aim now will be to substantiate this; to exhibit, by a careful reference to history, some of the special effects that have followed the introduction of this religion into the world, and that, in spite of all contrary tendencies, have succeeded in getting themselves established in society—effects which follow Christ's teachings to-day wherever they are allowed to control indi-

of the Government, mean knowledge and enlightenment and peace to the nations; the well-being of humanity; 'the greatest happiness to the greatest number;' not merely a converting power, but a great elevating power, purifying the whole mass.

viduals and communities; to show that there has been, in short, 'a thorough interweaving of all the roots of Christianity with the modern history of the world.' As Renan admits, Christianity has become as great an element in the growth of mankind as Greek rationalism. It is in all the tissues of modern peoples, and will not be effaced.

The late Mr. Loring Brace, in his *Gesta Christi*, has observed: 'There are certain practices, principles, and ideals—now the richest inheritance of the race—that have been either implanted, or stimulated, or supported by Christianity.' They are such as these: regard for the personality of the weakest and the poorest; respect for woman; humanity and charity to the child, the prisoner, the stranger, and the needy; unceasing opposition to all forms of cruelty, oppression, and slavery; the duty of personal purity, and the sacredness of marriage; a more equitable division of the profits of labour; the right of all persons to enjoy equal political and social privileges; and a profound opposition to war. Effects such as these are among the best achievements of Christianity.¹

There are two separate statements involved in this position. It is implied, in the first place, that certain social and political evils have existed in the past, and have been removed: and secondly, that *Christian* ideas have been at the root of these reforms.

Quotation
from Mr.
Loring
Brace.

Two points
to be
established
that (1).
certain
social and
political
evils have
been
removed;
(2) that
Christianity
has removed
them.

¹ See *Gesta Christi*, Preface, p. vi.

INFLUENCE ON THE PAGAN WORLD.

1. To discuss the subject, then, and to come to a right conclusion, we must go back to the period in the world's history, when Christianity appeared, and discover what new conceptions there were that came with it, and how those principles gradually affected social habits and practices; purifying peoples, laws, and States; and causing great abuses and wrongs to melt away.

Suitability
of Palestine
to be the
cradle of
Christianity.

(a) This new moral force originated in a remote province of the great Roman empire, which then controlled the civilised world. It was in Palestine, an obscure country that does not figure largely in ordinary history, but one whose situation made it eminently fitted to be the cradle of new influences such as these. For Palestine was at that time the centre of the ancient world, the meeting place of nations, the highway by which men must pass from the East to the West. It was not a self-contained little country, inhabited only by Jews. There was a variety of nationalities gathered there, so that Palestine was almost an epitome of the whole world; and there is scarcely a race in Europe or Asia which has not had its part in the history of that land. It is not without significance, therefore, that it should have been the scene of the ministry of Christ, and have given to the world a Book suited to every land.

(b) Palestine being a part of the Roman empire, it significantly happened that the new Faith soon began to measure itself with the greatest power then existing; and it is to the influence it exerted on Roman law, and on the institutions, morals, and practices of that people, that we must, therefore, turn our attention. Oriental life was not affected by Christianity, and it remains substantially what it was then. But the religion of Christ ultimately triumphed at Rome, and the Cross became the imperial standard. Mr. Freeman—a writer who rarely touches upon the religious side of history—says in his *Chief Periods of European History*:¹ ‘That Christianity should become the religion of the Roman empire is the miracle of history; but that it did so become is the leading fact of all history from that day onwards.’

Influence of Christianity on the Roman empire.

(c) We have already recalled the moral and social condition of Greece and Rome, the most civilised portions of the earth, at that time. True, there are fine pictures of magnanimity and valour, which were transformed and exalted into Christian virtues; but so far as society was concerned, ‘gross immorality entered into the ritual of worship; religion raised no voice against the butchery of gladiatorial shows, or against infanticide or suicide, or even against the horrors of

Decay of faith and morals in the Roman empire.

¹ Ed. 1886, p. 67.

human sacrifice.' Indeed, religious belief had almost died out. The gods and goddesses were discredited, as in the Satires of Lucilius and the Dialogues of Lucian. Horace had described, in a most contemptuous style, the manufacture of a god; and though the masses still clung to the ancient superstitions, and priests and others, from self-interest, still encouraged idolatrous worship and maintained shrines and temples, yet underneath all this there was a deep decay of faith, and a widespread scepticism.

Decay of
the State.

(d) And with this loosening of religious beliefs, the decay of States has followed. As long as religion was a power in ancient Rome, the national polity was maintained, but when faith declined, public spirit languished, and the social structure began to be dissolved.¹ And it was only the religion of Christ that saved it. The new ideas, the new principles of thought and conduct, which it infused, its struggles with lawlessness and force, its humanising spirit and higher impulses, entering into the life of nations, gave to political energies a new direction, remodelled laws, reconstructed States, and urged them forward on a

¹ 'The Romans, seeing the gods ridiculed in the theatre, depised by men of the world, deserted by philosophers; seeing also heaven invaded by the most unworthy tyrants, who were placed in the rank of gods, sank deeper and deeper in an abyss of corruption and impiety.'—Schmidt's *Social Results of Early Christianity*, p. 128, 2nd ed.

fresh career of progress. Christianity became in the fourth and fifth centuries a political force so powerful as to be able to 'remould the shattered world.' The Christian kingdom and the Roman empire began about the same time; but the Christian kingdom became the growing, and the pagan empire the sinking power, because in the latter few men really believed, while the Christians believed with all their heart. A sceptical age is never an heroic age. There can never be freedom without faith.

NEW CONCEPTIONS CAUSING THE CHANGE.

2. Now, what we have first to ask is this:

What *new and nobler conceptions* came with Christianity, that tended gradually to reform and elevate the world?

The new conceptions introduced by Christianity.

(a) In the first place, instead of 'a soul-less world-soul'—the highest conception of philosophic and pantheistic minds—and instead of the polytheism and pantheon of popular belief, Christ re-affirmed the world's primitive monotheism, the special faith of the Hebrew race—one Supreme, Personal, and Holy God; and He, as the Divine Son, added to this the distinct and inspiring revelation of the *Divine Fatherhood*; not in the sense of mere supremacy, as understood by the ancient Aryan peoples, but in His spirit of condescending love, extending alike to all His creatures, whom He

A new thought of God.

calls into moral fellowship with Himself. For this Being, whom Christ called by no other name than 'Father,' is shown, in the mirror of Christ's own Life and Cross, as seeking and saving men, the most vicious and depraved, by virtue of a Divine self-devotion and self-sacrifice, thereby imparting His own spiritual life and blessedness to sinful, restless souls who believe in Him. In the training of conscience, in the formation of character, in the moral and mental progress of the world, there is no force to be compared with *the conception that men form of God*. A true knowledge of their Creator which brings with it a true idea of man's own lost condition without God, is essential to the uplifting and happiness of His creatures. And the God declared by Jesus, the one perfect Revealer of the Father, is the sublimest conception that has ever entered human thought, inspired human worship and song, consecrated human philanthropy and affection, and interpreted human history. Even the sceptic has to admit that it is 'the loveliest of dreams.' But the way it has changed the old world into the new, the way it has affected character, duty, aspiration, heroism, proves it to be no dream, but the greatest of realities. It was nothing short of a new revelation. There had been no progress towards such a change in men's thoughts of God in preceding religions, only retrogression. In Christ it flashed out as though from the opened

No force
to be
compared
with the
idea men
have of God.

heavens, and through the Divine Spirit infused new hope and energy into human breasts. Men take courage when the lowliest feel themselves the objects of the loving thought of the Divine Father of the universe; all creation smiles; and the race can enter on a new path of development. This *new thought of God*, then, as given by Christ, separates the modern from the ancient world.

(b) Again, closely allied to this new conception of God, and springing out of it, was the *new conception of man*, as given by Christ. Antiquity did not recognise humanity. Paganism had a low conception of God, and consequently a low conception of man. Brilliant as Greece was in the history of civilisation, she had a contempt for the poor and for 'barbarians;' because the notion of a universal God and Father was unknown to her. In the Christian revelation, we have God seeking man, rather than man seeking God; we have God speaking to His creatures, who, though originally made in His image, had marred that image by sin, as a person speaks to a person, in accents of tender solicitude and love, seeking to turn them back to Himself. Now what must be the effect of this redemption of the individual on man himself? Surely such a thought as this: of what *intrinsic worth and dignity* must that nature in man be which is sought by God; to which such a Divine message of reconciliation as we have in the gospel

A new
thought of
man.

is addressed; and whose intelligent assent and willing service are so earnestly desired.¹

All men
worth
saving.

(c) Apart from the gospel, we are almost ready to question whether some of our depraved fellow-men are worth saving at all, or capable of being saved; but when revealed by Christ in this new light—as objects of the Father's love, as all precious in His sight—they are invested with a dignity which makes it worth our while to save and rescue them. True, Christ has painted the nature of sin in dark and dreadful colours; but just because human nature is itself so noble; so capable of realising a high ideal. Hence His great doctrine is *regeneration*—the *re-forming* of man after the Divine image by the Holy Ghost. The cardinal truths of Christianity are based on this grand conception of man's true nature, when redeemed by the Son of God. No such concep-

¹ We here see the place occupied by public preaching and teaching in the Christian system; so unlike the ceremonial ritual performed *for* the people by the priest in all other religions. Paganism knew nothing of any systematic exhibition of spiritual truth. But ever since Christ preached His great Sermon on the Mount, Christianity has been propagated in the world mainly by means of preaching—preaching to all classes, preaching addressed to the judgment, the conscience, and the heart. No form of religion or philosophy has ever so recognised man's capacity—capacity for knowledge, for faith, for affection, for immortality; has ever so honoured the mental and moral element in man as this religion has done; which has thus won its victories, not by force, but by spiritual persuasion, and the appeals of the Old Testament are of a similar nature.

tion, and therefore no such hopes and possibilities, ever entered into the mind before they were given by Christ.

(d) And that Incarnate Life on earth itself proves the worth of human character, the worth of man. Christ's life suggests the height of nobleness at which any life may aim. The incarnation was 'a prophecy of what man may become.' That perfect Life was a type of the final perfection of humanity. It teaches, moreover, that everything in human nature, except sin, is capable of being consecrated to a Divine service. There was nothing belonging to man which Christ did not take unto Himself when He took our humanity. Hence life, in all its aspects and relations, is richer since He lived. Infancy is holier because He was an infant. Motherhood is nobler since He did 'not despise the virgin's womb.' Labour has become more dignified than it was even among the Jews, because His 'Divine hand touched the plane.' Companionship is dearer, 'because He loved and was loved.' Social life and joys have been made more sacred since He took part in social intercourse, and at a wedding-feast wrought His first miracle. The most fascinating of all arts—music—has been consecrated to Divine worship, because in the last solemn hours of His life He joined His disciples in singing a hymn; and congregational music and exultant chants now express the joyous faith of

The
incarnation
a proof of
the worth
of man and
a type of
his final
perfection.

Christianity. Philosophy does not sing; unbelief does not sing; but true religion will be 'jubilant with song.' Christ blessed and sanctified all the affections and faculties of the human soul, and greatly ennobled the idea of man. And the race has become emphatically a new race since Christ thus, in word and life, and in His death upon the Cross to procure man's salvation, witnessed to the essential worth and dignity of man.

(e) Such a truth has had immense and fruitful power. Life can now be no longer despised; for each individual life—the lowest and the poorest—is full of promise. Despots and emperors have fought against it; but such an impulse once given can never pass from the life of the world. It became the germ of future freedoms; teaching potentates and governments that they exist for the individual; not the individual for them. For it is from this idea of *personality* and consequent responsibility, to which Christ witnessed, that the rights of man have sprung. It was Christ who founded the only true school of spiritual freedom, which at length triumphed over the greatest political power the world has seen. The sacred reverence for conscience which He instilled, sets that conscience free; and freedom of thought, and civil and religious liberty—the most precious of all liberties, the most sacred attributes of human personality—are of the essence of the principle for

Rights of men have sprung from realizing the idea of personality.

Liberty of conscience.

which Christ lived and died. It is the bread which He cast upon the waters; and which *we* have found after many days.¹

(f) In all the ancient civilisations, everything was based on authority. In political matters, it was the authority of the reigning monarch; in social matters, that of the superior castes and elders; in domestic matters, that of the father; in spiritual matters, that of the shastras and priests. The mind of the people was thus held in political, social, and spiritual thralldom. The majesty of the human soul was completely forgotten. The spiritual degeneracy of the lower orders was inevitable. The idea of the rights of the people, of the responsibility of a king to his subjects, of electoral representation, of local self-government had scarcely begun to dawn. All the States of the old world, even the freest commonwealths of Greece were founded on the principle that man did not

Authority
the basis
of ancient
civilisation.

¹ It was the lessening of respect for human *personality* as based on the conscience as the organ of God's voice, and the transference of that respect to the theoretic and dogmatic intellect in the Church of the second, third, and fourth centuries—a distinct departure from the mind of Christ—that explains the growth of the spirit of intolerance and persecution in the Church. Against Mr. Lecky, who argues that toleration is 'the child of scepticism,' Dr. Fairbairn maintains that it 'is necessary the moment religion is made a matter for the conscience rather than the magistrate, but impossible the moment it becomes an affair of the magistrate rather than the conscience' (Introductory Chapter to the *Congregational Jubilee Lectures*, p. 60).

belong to himself.¹ But the social Christianity of Christ uprooted this notion ; and in showing that all men belong to God gave back to man his individuality, and so in giving man back to himself, gave him to his fellows. Side by side with the command to 'honour the king,' we are told to 'honour *all* men ;' and that has since been the chief factor in all social and political reform. States perish while the individual citizen is immortal.

Influence
of Stoical
philosophy.

Here, again, we do not overlook the influence of the Stoical philosophy, which, in the beauty of its precepts, developed the idea of ethical obligation and of inward freedom, nor the native independence of the Teutonic tribes, both of which contributed something towards the liberties of the modern world ; but certain it is as an historical fact, that in Christianity alone was found a force able to destroy the dominion of States and tyrants over the individual soul.

These two root ideas, then,—a nobler and more humane conception of God, and the essential worth and dignity of man, of each separate

¹ Man *as man* was nothing ; he was something only as he held some position *in the State*. Plato, Aristotle, the Stoics, Cicero, recognise no virtues but those of the citizen. Individual virtue was not allowed to rise above the common level ; Aristides was banished ; Socrates was condemned to death. And he who, in the State, had enough wealth to have *no need to work*, was, in most cases, the only man worthy of esteem (see Schmidt's *Social Results of Christianity*, pp. 10-24, 2nd ed.).

personality—and the sentiments and judgments related to them, lie at the basis of all social and benevolent reforms, and of the onward progress of the world. They entered, first of all, into a society abounding, as we have seen, with corrupt practices, rife with all kinds of domestic abuses and social tyrannies, where the strong bore down the weak and the rich oppressed the poor. Planting their influences in the individual soul,¹ they gradually infused a moral and transforming force into family, social, and national relations—creating a social brotherhood and making all things new.²

True ideas of God and man lie at the basis of all true reforms.

CHRISTIANITY AND FAMILY LIFE.

3. We proceed, in the first place, to trace the influence of these ideas on *the family*. It is here that we see perhaps the most remarkable effect of Christianity; since it is not so much by its larger results as by its finer products that a moral force is to be estimated. And the whole aspect of family life has been changed and elevated by Christ.

The influence of these ideas on the family.

(a) And first let us note what He did for *children*. In all the national types of family life

On childhood.

¹ M. Schmidt observes that society founded upon an unjust fact—that is, *contempt for the human personality*—can be saved only by a new fact: and the tyrant Tiberius, a contemporary of Christ, uttered the memorable words: ‘We must seek the remedy for our corruption *in the recesses of the soul itself*.’

² It has been remarked by Stein that the genuine, *most* lasting, and most popular sovereignty is the *sovereignty of social reform*.

Treatment
of children
under
Roman law.

existing at the time of Christ, the head of the house exercised an irresponsible power. He consulted only the interests of the State. The life and liberties of wife and children were in his hands. The Roman law, like the Aryan, and all ancient law, made the child the absolute property of the father—an idea that explains, no doubt, though it could never justify, the barbarous practice of human sacrifices. A son had no individual rights and claims, but was liable to be sold or killed at the will of the parent. In a legal sense he was worse off than a slave. The law of the 'Twelve Tables' authorised a father to either abandon or kill his deformed children, if he preferred not to rear them. The father could take their property, and marry and divorce them at pleasure; and the sons could escape only by a sale of their persons. Philosophers, such as Plato and Aristotle, justified such customs.

Infanticide

Now Christ's teaching checked such unlicensed tyranny. In calling *God* 'Father,' the idea of *human* fatherhood became a more sacred thing; and in calling man '*son*'—a son of God—the idea of personal rights, whether of a parent or a child, came to be recognised. The Christian legislation of Valentinian and Justinian still further protected a son, and extended to him his rights. Infanticide, permitted and legalised as it has been in so many countries, aroused the indignation of the

early Christians; and other inhuman practices, such as the abandonment and systematic exposure of the children of the poor, and the female or defective children of the rich, afforded ample scope for sympathy and help. And there was in almost all cases a natural love for their own offspring in the parent's heart; yet very often these little ones were taken by witches for their incantations, oftener by slave dealers for immoral purposes. Stoical philosophy was powerless here; but the Christian declared that 'to expose a child was to kill him.' 'Whosoever shall find such an one,' was the public proclamation, 'shall bring him to the Church'; and the Christian Church gathered these unfortunates into houses of mercy, orphan asylums, and hospitals—a fact abundantly proved by the epitaphs in the catacombs; and from these have sprung the numerous refuges, reformatories, industrial schools, and other charities of modern times—the care for the foundling and the ill-used, the sick and the afflicted, the deaf and the dumb—thus carrying out the practical religion of Him who showed such tenderness for, and set such value on, the little child.¹ It is the religion of

Charitable
institutions
for children

¹ Antiquity has left no trace as Dr. Martineau has pointed out, of any organised charitable effort. *Disinterested* benevolence was unknown. Deep concern for the relief of suffering belongs to a totally different order of society, founded on wholly different forms of belief. '*Charity*,' Mr. Lecky says,

Christ that has impelled philanthropists like the late Lord Shaftesbury to work for chimney-sweeps and ragged-school children, to legislate for the rescue of women and children from degrading and dangerous forms of labour—so that, to quote the words of the late Right Hon. W. E. Forster, M.P., ‘the condition of manufacturing industry is now as good as in former days it was bad’¹—and to guard their moral purity from cruel lusts; while new forms of art and literature have been created to minister to their wants.

Indeed, from the earliest centuries, the Church was connected with the School; councils and synods everywhere ordered the education of the young; for to that true view of life and of the world, given by Christianity, which constitutes the highest culture, the young cannot be too early introduced. In the ancient republics the noble mission of training mind and soul was delegated to the *slave*; the Church entrusted the care to pious *mothers*.²

The advent of Christ was the true ‘triumph

‘was one of the earliest, as it was one of the noblest creations of Christianity.’ And consult Uhlhorn’s *Christian Charity of the Ancient Church* (T. & T. Clark).

¹ Speeches in celebration of the 80th birthday of Lord Shaftesbury, p. 16. Ragged School Union.

² The first traces of Schools that may be called ‘primary’ are met with in the fourth century: and the necessity of teaching useful trades to children was early insisted on.

of the innocents.' The sacredness of infancy dates from the time when the Babe of Bethlehem lay in His obscure cradle; and when Christ afterwards took the little ones in His arms, throwing around their helplessness the Divine protection of His love, and said, 'Of such is the kingdom of heaven,' the 'coronation of childhood' took place. Thus Christ, by making childhood the very type of the kingdom of purity and love, taught men effectually to reverence it.

(b) In the second place, if Christianity has thus recognised the rights of children, it has done even more for *woman*; and the new conception of man's duty to man has completely changed woman's place and relation in the modern world. In India and China, in Greece and Rome, it was alike declared that 'woman was not fit for independence.' A contemptuous distrust of the female sex rendered laws and society towards her harshly oppressive. In the golden days of Grecian civilisation, when Sophocles wrote, and Pericles ruled, and Socrates taught, when men had to go back to the pages of Homer, or to the pictures of the dramatists, for their ideals of female excellence, the idea was scoffed at that wives could claim to be the equals of their husbands, or that women should share the same education as men. Aristotle regarded women as 'beings of a certain intermediate order between freemen and slaves.' A woman was

Christ
and woman.

Treatment
of woman
apart from
Christianity.

always a minor, and never free. The wife became her husband's adopted ward — his property; and for even petty offences he had at least a qualified power over her life. Divorce was a daily occurrence. Juvenal tells us of the woman who had eight husbands in five years. Even Plato suggested a community of wives, for political purposes. Marriage was a union formed in the interest of the State, and had no moral importance. Concubinage was legalised by Augustus. Modesty was 'a presumption of ugliness.' Family vice was rampant. There was a decay of all that is pure and noble in womanly character—one cause of the decay of Sparta; and her wrongs only began to be avenged when the Roman empire fell before those wild Germanic tribes, who, with all their fierceness, cultivated the domestic virtues, and cherished a chivalrous respect for their women. But even German manliness and purity suffered from contact with Roman and Greek vices; and had it not been for another power—the restraining and elevating spirit of Christianity—the German character would soon have lost its native nobleness.

Marriage.

(c) For the *idea of marriage* was very low even among the Germans. A woman was bought like any other property; and the system of tutelage or guardianship, though very different from the Roman, gave the husband absolute authority—the

right to sell, or punish, or even kill his wife. But, 'it is worthy of the charity of our times,' says the Christian Code of Justinian, 'to give this new position to women; tutelage must be done away with;' thus completing the legislation begun by Constantine. Again, the German husband might be faithless, and he would go unpunished; but if the wife left him without good reason, she might be 'suffocated in a ditch.' This unjust and one-sided state of the law, and the depraved tone of public opinion with regard to the morality of the sexes, which prevails even in modern times, are the outcome of the ancient subjection of woman.

The equal obligation of the law of purity on the man as well as on the woman, is the great natural law of that kingdom of which Christ has made us citizens. The spirit of the New Testament is the spirit of equality; and it is this spirit which condemns institutions, such as polygamy and slavery, which are based on inequality; on the making of one law for the man and another for the woman; one for the rich and another for the poor: and those social, legal, and political rights, which women are now beginning to enjoy, in all civilized countries, received their first form, and have been slowly won, through that new conception of woman which Christ gave to the world.

The
spirit of
Christianity
the spirit
of equality.

The base selfishness and caprice of men have met with a stern master in Christianity. It set

its face against free marriage, and easy divorce; and adultery was early punished as a heinous crime. Tertullian tells us how the violation of chastity was to the Christians more dreadful than any form of punishment or death, and was so acknowledged by their enemies. The Christian idea of marriage is the highest the world has seen. So sacred is the union of soul, that it is likened by the first Christian writers to the union of Christ with the souls of true believers—the noblest image that could be found of protective tenderness and self-sacrificing love. In Justinian's legislation, we see the influence of this idea. 'Nothing in human affairs,' he says, 'is so much to be venerated as marriage;' and he warns all to abstain from those unnatural vices of sensuality, which Christian thought cannot even picture, but of which Greek and Latin literature is full.

No philosophy and no religion, except Christianity, could raise the condition of woman.

No philosophy, and no religion but Christianity, is known to have rescued mankind from such abominable practices. Stoical influence tried to check them, but with little success. Under Marcus Aurelius, there was an attempt at the revival of purity and social duty; but the inspiration faded. Prosperity and luxury and household slavery made both the Roman and Greek experiment in family life to be a failure; and it was not until Christ came, 'born of a woman,' and made holy women the companions of His ministry, that the

sex was emancipated and raised. Women ceased to be the toys or slaves of men's lust or laziness; and became queens of the hearth, teachers and mothers in the Church, counsellors and benefactresses; gaining that position which has since come to be the chief index of the highest civilisation. It was that Divine grace which glorified gentleness, and consecrated purity, and showed the Church as 'the Bride of Christ,' which He has loved and for which He gave Himself, that has affected this marvellous change in the condition and relations of woman; and through her, in the constitution of family life, and in the whole complexion of society. And there is no more striking proof of the heavenly power of Christ's religion than that, out of the moral corruption of these ancient intellectual nations, there should have sprung 'a flower so exquisite and so fragrant as Christian family life.'

CHRISTIANITY AND SOCIAL LIFE.

4. But we must pass now to notice the influence of the new Faith—the effect produced by Christian ideas—on *social and national life* and its relations.

Influence of
Christianity
on social
life.

There were many social evils existing in the time of Christ, as they have existed in every age; and in preaching the spiritual equality of all men, as children of the one Father—a great fundamental doctrine that underlay all His teaching—He laid

the foundation of the only economy, political or social, which would be found to work, and taught that the mutual bearing of burdens, and brotherly co-operation, and self-sacrifice, formed the law of human life. This Christian law of the moral obligation of man to man—quite a different sentiment from mere scientific altruism—has wrought a wonderful change in the relation of human societies towards the poor, the uncultured, and the dependent. Constantine, and after him, Valentinian I. and Honorius, passed measures of justice in behalf of the weak and the oppressed; being convinced that ‘true worship consists in helping the poor and needy.’¹

Slavery.

(a) In the social evils referred to, the working classes were, and always have been, the most involved; and when Christianity came into the world, labour meant in most cases *slavery*. There were few wage-earners. The labour of society was done by slaves. Honest work was despised as servile.

¹ In some of the ancient republics, such as Sparta and Rome, a careful system of training succeeded in evoking a sense of the duty of self-sacrifice to the interests of the State; and hence it has been argued that the same spirit may be elicited for the general interests of mankind. But such a spirit was only excited in small communities, where it was possible for the individual to feel, what one feels in a joint-stock company, that his own interests and those of the community were one. When Rome became an empire, and the privileges of citizenship were vastly extended, the highest form of patriotism gradually died out. And so we see that such methods as antiquity employed would be utterly inadequate to create that enthusiasm for the abstract idea of

Husbandmen and artisans were held to be incapable of greatness of soul. And this 'right of laziness' became one of the most active causes of the fall of the Roman empire.¹ This detestable system of slavery, which denied that men were spiritually equal, and made some the property of others, was firmly rooted in human society, when Christ appeared. Even philosophers and patriots upheld it. The slave was not regarded as a man. Aristotle calls him 'an animated tool.' He had no rights; no relation to society; none to God. It was a common remark: 'Do the divinities then care for slaves?' The Stoical spirit, noble as it was, had little influence here. Seneca and Epictetus, Pliny and Plutarch, and Marcus Aurelius, felt that slavery was contrary to nature; but Seneca relates how a certain Stoic amused himself by feeding his fish with fragments of his mutilated slaves.

Condition
of slaves

When, however, the humane influence of the new Faith began to work, we see, not the immediate emancipation of slaves, but a gradual amelioration

Ameliorated
by Chris-
tianity.

humanity, which the Positivist school would substitute for those great principles which have created a mighty army of self-sacrificing workers in the cause of Christ, and through Him, on behalf of the entire family of man.

¹ Gibbon reckons the slave population of the Roman empire under Claudius as sixty millions, or equal to the number of freemen. Three-fifths of the population of the city of Rome were slaves. The island of Ægina, with an area of only 42 square miles, contained at one time 470,000 slaves. Rich persons often owned one or two thousand slaves.

of their lot. Christ acted with the truest wisdom when He entered on no avowed contest with this iniquity, which would have destroyed the fabric of society altogether. In certain stages of social development slavery may be the best thing practicable—‘relatively good,’ as Herbert Spencer holds, ‘though absolutely bad’; and General Gordon drew a distinction between slave-raids and domestic slavery; but Christ’s broad, deep teachings of humanity gradually melt the fetters of the slave, and the degradation becomes impossible. What the religion of Christ first did was to convert the slave, while still a slave, from being a tool to being an industrious working man, thus adding a new dignity to labour—the main source of national prosperity. The urgent need was to free *souls*. The natural feelings of a baptised bondman, who knew himself to be a freeman in Christ, would be those of resentment against the master-ship of a heathen lord; nevertheless slaves were charged to be obedient to their masters, while Christian masters were to regard their slaves as ‘brothers beloved,’¹ to teach them a handicraft, and then set them free. This change went on for some centuries, till we find, in what became the Christian empire, the labour question advancing, and guilds and corporations of artisans working, not for masters, but for their own benefit; from which

¹ Philemon 16.

were produced great artists, such as built the cathedrals of Cologne and Strassburg.¹

In the early Church, which was far in advance of the civil legislation of the times, there was to be 'no bond and free.' The only real slavery is sin—common to master and servant. The slave was put on the same spiritual footing with his owner; both met, redeemed by the same blood, side by side, at their Lord's Table, and received the memorials of His dying love. In the Church's earliest liturgy, there was a prayer 'for them that suffer in bitter bondage;' and 'manumission' or the emancipation of a slave became a common act of piety to God.² 'To buy a slave was to gain a soul.' The laws of Constantine, and still more of Justinian, amply show the working of the new spirit upon the legislation and customs of the time. Everything tended in the direction of

Christian
brotherhood.

¹ This readiness to improve the condition of the slave, while still unwilling to emancipate him, has no doubt served to justify the practice in the eyes of even professedly Christian communities down to our own time, though *self-interest* has ever played the foremost part. All such evils die hard when it is a question of profit and loss; and American slavery lasted as long as it did because it was a very profitable trade, and because the conscience of Christians was not sufficiently aroused.

² Rich pagans directed in their wills that the blood of their slaves should be shed in the arena; Christian masters, in their wills, gave them freedom and legacies (see Schmidt's *Social Results*, pp. 219-227). Bede relates how, in early Britain, St. Wilfrid of York released 200 serfs; and 400 years later, St. Wulfstan of Worcester preached a crusade against slavery throughout his diocese.

liberty. We meet with such an expression as 'the intuition of humanity'—a conception foreign to the philosophy and poetry of the ancient world.

Gladiatorial
shows.

Christian legislation also prevented the employment of slaves in those cruel and licentious shows, which, at the dawn of Christianity, afforded the highest gratification to the Roman people. The melancholy citizen went to see men killed 'as a distraction.'¹ Under Trajan, as many as 10,000 prisoners and gladiators supplied brutal sport in the amphitheatres: the feeling of pity and of humanity did not exist. Under the first *Christian* emperor, all gladiators were 'prohibited from carrying on their profession.' Christian sentiment waged successful war against such barbarities, and did away with these human sacrifices.² The wild licentiousness too of the stage was restrained; Constantine and Theodosius the Great prohibited the 'shameful spectacles;' the selling of women and children for its entertainments, and for immoral purposes, was forbidden; and the Church excluded from her communion all who participated in such abominations.

Slavery
tenacious
of life.

Still, slavery was not easily abolished. The barbarian conquests re-established it in a new form,

¹ For a full and fearful account see Schmidt's *Social Results of Early Christianity*, pp. 92-101.

² With the blood of the martyr-monk Telemachus, shed in protest in the Colosseum at Rome, the gladiatorial shows for ever ceased.

and we meet with it in the Middle Ages ; but the slave markets of Europe were gradually removed. Its abolition in Scandinavia was the direct result of one of the first Christian kings. Thirty-seven Church councils passed Acts favourable to slaves. The selling one 'for whom Christ died' was condemned as the deepest offence. On Christian festivals, prisoners were freed 'in the name of Christ.'

The liberating influence of Christ's teaching on the slaves or serfs themselves is seen very forcibly in the revolts of the German peasants in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The gospel message, proclaimed afresh in the Protestant Reformation, fell as good news on those down-trodden masses of society ; and they were quick to see that such injustice as that under which they groaned was not to be reconciled with the teachings of Christ. Serfdom was undermined, and the principles of freedom took a deeper root.

Slave
revolts.

Later on, and coming down into modern history, we have all the horrors of the African and American slave trade, till, by the exertions of such philanthropists as Sharpe, Wilberforce, and Clarkson, England is brought to see its duty in the matter, and pays down, exactly eighteen hundred years after Christ died, her twenty millions of money to free her last slave. Thirty years later, at the price of one of the greatest wars of history, America has to

Modern
slavery.

knock the last shackle off her last slave in obedience to Christ. Freedom and justice must ultimately prevail, when a religion spreads abroad the ideas of *human brotherhood* and *equality* before God. Christ created an atmosphere in which slavery could not live, and the time will come when oppression of every form will cease. Other forces have no doubt been at work, side by side with the religious motive; but 'the great Emancipator in history is Jesus Christ.' 'Where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.'

What do we see now in Christian countries? In the place of slaves and serfs, the working classes, who, with their growing liberties, powers, and prospects, are a distinct creation of the religion of Christ, and for whom there is no social feature of Christianity more important than *the dignity it confers on labour*. According to the New Testament the moral way to acquire property is, not to try to enlist chance on our side by turning the wheel of fortune, but *to work*: 'if any will not work, neither let him eat.' And as a means of doing good, of administering charity, men must work. •

Dignity of
labour.

Christ taught by precept, and by example, that the greatest love consisted in *service*, and nothing tended more to raise the condition of slaves than this essentially Christian idea. The name of 'servant,' so despised by pagan society, became for Christians the most honourable title.

(b) Again, the influence of the religion of love on the half savage tribes of Europe was early seen in the control of revengeful passions, and bitter hatred, and cruel superstitions. Ordeals by fire and water, and other superstitious tests for finding out the will of God, were made illegal, as being utterly opposed to the teaching of Christ. Personal feuds and blood revenge were gradually abolished; public justice took the place of private feuds; and unbridled men were brought under law and government. Private and unrestrained war, which left so many desolated homes, and nearly reduced Europe to anarchy, was checked; and enemies were reconciled in a remarkable manner by the religious fraternities of the Middle Ages, 'who traversed the country on a crusade of peace proclaiming what was called "The Truce of God."' No less than thirty Christian councils in different parts of Europe proclaimed this 'Peace of God;' and under the magic power of the new spirit the savage storms of strife were quelled; and for months and years the bloody swords were left to rust—an earnest of the time when, as the Bible says, 'men shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; and nations shall learn war no more.'

Christianity
controls
revenge and
superstition.

Abolition of
ordeals;

of personal
feuds;

of private
war.

(c) On the general question of *war* itself—'the War. gigantic evil of history'—we can only touch. It is true that Christ laid down no set precept against

war; and it is difficult to reason against a proper defence of secular rights, whether by individuals or by States. It is also true that war may give occasion for the display of some noble qualities, though it oftener, as Shelley says, extinguishes the sentiment of reason and justice in the mind, and fosters a confidence in mere brute force. But it is undeniable that the spirit of Christ's entire teaching is to disarm the hatred of men, and to lead nations to live at peace. Everyone will admit that, whatever may have been the practice of Christian nations—and the wars of Christendom have been most shameful, and, owing in modern times to the very refinements and general complexity of civilisation, on a vaster and more terrible scale than ever—the spirit of Jesus is utterly opposed to war; and it is with *His* spirit and teaching, and not with the conduct of His professed followers, that we are dealing. In the Roman period, as Christ's religion spread, war was discouraged; many in the early Church maintaining that no Christian could be a soldier. The first Christians were called 'priests of peace;' and sure it is that as the principles of the Prince of Peace extend, and His kingdom of universal love and brotherhood is established in the earth, there will be an end of war; and Milton's majestic vision of the great Christian commonwealth will be fulfilled in the sight of the nations. Not upon any selfish

The spirit
of Christ
opposed
to war.

‘balance of power,’ but on Christian foundations alone can the peace of the world be built.

Even now peace is recognised among Christian States as the normal condition; and every device is employed to avert an outbreak of war, which is becoming limited, more and more, to those disputes which are felt on both sides to involve the liberties, and even the existence, of nations. The ancient law of retaliation is now almost wholly repudiated; and there has been a growing disposition to settle disputes by arbitration and mediation.¹ The conception of International Law, which finds its home in the countries and colonies of Europe, and whose first great text-book² was written by the Christian jurist, Hugo Grotius, never existed in the pre-Christian ages; and exists now only in those regions where men are beginning to accept the Christian doctrine of States, which regards each State as under moral obligations towards others.³

International law originated by Christianity.

The laws that have shaped the civilisation of European Christianity.

5. That forces like these, which have changed Europe from barbarism to civilisation, were *essen-*

¹ These methods have been inspired and enforced by the very words of Christ. See Matt. xviii. 15-17.

² *De Jure Belli et Pacis*, 1629.

There was one well-known force in the Middle Ages that softened the cruelty of war, and that was *chivalry*, whose peculiar home was France and England. All brave and noble spirits admire this high ideal—an ideal of life quite different from any classic ideal: one that appealed to generous impulses; that cultivated self-respect, and indiffer-

tially Christian, and due to Christian motives, is abundantly evident from a perusal of the chronicles of the period, and from the legislation of the times. It was Christ's teaching that changed the laws; and it is the laws that have shaped our civilisation.¹

ence to danger; that guarded the honour of woman, and greatly added to her power; that enjoined courtesy and hospitality; that cherished some of the purest and highest virtues, and embodied a conception of character which has impressed itself on the manners and morals of modern times. This chivalric ideal was just such as Christianity would foster and confirm. The initiation of the knight was 'essentially religious in form.' The first oath he took was this: 'I shall fortify and defend the Christian religion to the utmost of my power.' Among the duties of knighthood was the teaching of 'all holy Christian love.'

¹ In the systems of antiquity, based on harsh egoism and the inequality of man—where woman and work and poverty were alike despised—there was no inherent power of progressive development in the direction of a civilisation founded on radically different doctrines. The struggle that went on for centuries between persistent *custom* and the *new spirit* that inspired the legislation testified to this. Ancient legislation recognised only *law*; the idea of *duty* gradually gained recognition; and there was a triumph of humanity, natural affection, and equity, over former severity. Christian ideas began first to influence the sentiments of philosophers, and then the laws of the pagan emperors and jurisconsults; till the victorious Church was able to enlarge the sphere of benevolence, and reform society on a Christian basis (see Schmidt's *Social Results*, pp. 380-443). Laws against cruelty, oppression, unchastity, are all enforced with religious motives. Later on, the laws of Charlemagne amply illustrate the working of Christ's religion; the words of Scripture being constantly used in condemning vengeance and oppression, and in enjoining peace and charity. The best Anglo-Saxon laws are distinctly Christian, taking often the character of a pastoral letter; which is due very largely to the fact that the

It was this new and living force, breathing justice and mercy, thus early impressed on the laws of Britain, that gradually built up, through succeeding centuries, the British nation, and has been the secret of all its greatness.

CONCLUSION.

Such, then, are some of the social and political results which Christianity has wrought in the world, victories which no other religion has won, and which it has succeeded in winning amidst

Victories of
Christianity.

English clergy of that day were many of them lawyers, and exercised great influence in legislation. And it is to be remembered that English society at that time was more barbarous than that of the continent of Europe. In the ancient Code of Canute we read: 'Let every Christian man do as is needful for him; let him keep his Christianity.' King Alfred introduces his Code with the Ten Commandments and other Bible laws; and of his legislation, which he expressly states as a special result of the 'Faith of Christ,' he says, 'When Christ, the healer, came on earth, He said that He came with all good to do; and with all mild heartedness and lowly mindedness to teach.' In King Ethelred's dooms, we read: 'This then first: that we all love and worship one God, and zealously hold one Christianity,...that every man be regarded as entitled to right.' And Edward the Confessor gives utterance to the idea of Christian brotherhood, as follows, 'We have all one heavenly Father, and one spiritual Mother, which is called Ecclesia, that is, God's Church; and therefore are we brothers.' It has been clearly shown (see Stubbs' *Constitutional History*, i., p. 224) that it was under the influence of Christianity that England became a nation. It was not until the several tribal states—Northumbria, Mercia, Wessex—became members of the same Church, that Englishmen felt themselves fellow-countrymen and fellow-subjects. 'The unity of the Church was in the early period the only working unity.'

opposing forces which have waged war against it on every hand.

It is a force, springing, as we have seen, from a *true and worthy conception of God* as caring for man, and from the *consequent worth and dignity of man* as God's child, and therefore caring for his brother man, that has exerted such beneficent influence on national legislation, and on the domestic morals and social practices of mankind. A religion which can produce results such as these must surely be of God; and being of God it demands the whole-hearted allegiance of reasonable beings.

One reason why Christ and His benign religion do not get the credit that they should, is because the victories they achieve are silent victories; victories won first of all in the individual heart and life, secretly imbued with Christ's principles, and transformed by love to Him through the indwelling of His Spirit; then through the individual these victories lead to the noiseless disappearance of great social abuses, and to the gradual growth of justice, benevolence, purity, and truth. Spiritual forces are always silent; and silently but surely these are working around us now. They have *proved* their tonic and inspiring properties in a thousand ways: where is the man or the community that will not welcome them to heart and home?

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